THE

MAGIC OF WEALTH.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER I.

The Manor House, the seat of Mr. Oldways, was an ancient brick structure, which had retained the same external form, and nearly the same internal economy, from the period of its erection, in the year 1690, when the estate devolved to the Oldways family, in failure of issue male to one of the followers of the fortunes of the Prince of Orange, afterwards William the Third.

Oliver Oldways, who then came into possession, might have received a large accession of personal property, together

with a baronetcy, if he would have relinquished his family name; but the strongest temptations of interest or aggrandizement, were altogether impotent against the ruling principle of family pride, which then characterised, and has ever since continued peculiarly to distinguish the race of Oldways.

The present occupier came into possession of the estates of his father, after a long minority which he had passed under the tuition and guardianship of the Duke of Lorn, his maternal uncle.

His long minority, at the same time that it added the vast advantages of accumulation to the value of his inheritance, gave also the still greater benefit to his mind of an education more liberal, and views of the world much more enlightened, than could have been acquired from a father, bigotted to the very strictest construction of the principles of non-resistance, and passive obedience, formerly designated by the name

of toryism. Thus, instead of becoming the disciple of a tutor, who would have taught him that the mass of his fellow creatures were to be considered as a swinish multitude, to be muzzled and whipped into subjugation by the arm of power · he was educated under a roof whose noble owner was celebrated as a moderate, but firm and incorruptible champion of the people's lawful rights, and at whose table he gathered, from the lips of such men as Fox and Burke, Erskine, Wyndham, and Sheridan, in their earliest and brightest days, the genuine sentiments of British patriotism, which, without abstracting one point of radiance from the glory of the crown, or one atom from the sceptre's power, still deems the public welfare to be the only lawful origin, and only worthy end of royalty.

Soon after he had attained the age of twenty-one, Mr. Oldways was returned to parliament, as the representative of the county, which had been for nearly a century

represented by his ancestors. With the ardour and sincerity of youth, he entered into the political views of his uncle, and openly espoused his party, then termed the opposition; who ever found in him an adherent from principle, on whose zeal and integrity they could implicitly rely; although his talents were by no means of that dazzling description, which acquire notoriety for a senator. On the contrary, Mr. Oldways possessed the latent family pride of his ancestors; he adhered as rigidly as the proudest of them to the honour of his name; and to sustain unsullied the reputation of a gentleman of family and fortune, was the ruling passion of his soul. This spirit prohibited him from stooping to many of those mean artifices, which others used, to catch the gale of popularity. Scrupulous, even to a foible, he never suffered any object, however good or great, to be in his mind an apology for resorting to either meanness, or corruption, in achieving it. His de-

meanour was at all times gentlemanly, and generally reserved; no epithets of reproach against his antagonists in debate, ever escaped his lips; nor did any of those general and common-place charges of corruption and bad policy against the government, mark his reprobation of many of their public measures.

As a member of the whig-club, he was remarkable for two points; he never omitted to attend their meetings; and he was never known to utter a political sentiment at their table.

This taciturnity, on public topics, subjected him to the suspicion of some of the more ardent spirits of the day; who doubted the genuineness of his whiggism, from its falling so much below all comparison in noisiness with their own. They who knew him more intimately, however, could trace this reluctance in displaying his sentiments to worthier motives than a wish to conceal them. Though, from

the example and conversation of his uncle and his associates, he had imbibed the sincerest admiration of the principles of the British constitution, as recognised at the era of the Revolution; and though he ever made these principles the unchangeable basis of his political conduct, yet Adam Oldways was, by nature and habit, the very opposite to that sort of public characters, which were then only beginning to thrust themselves into notice by the violence of their political measures, and the intemperance of their popular harangues. As time unfolded to his view the motives and passions of the majority of these babblers, his dislike to the species increased, for he discovered in their career, the almost constant triumph of impudence and insincerity over truth and modest merit; he perceived that some of the loudest of these declaimers against corruption, were the most easily corrupted, and saw many of the most sympathetic

bewailers of the people's wrongs, become the most unfeeling mockers of the people's rights.

If such impressions as these influenced the mind of Mr. Oldways in the outset of his political life, in those comparatively moderate times; how much were those impressions strengthened after that mortifying lesson to the bigotted worshippers of any human theory or system, afforded by the horrors of the French Revolution;—by one of the most fruitless, yet sanguinary convulsions, of anarchy and power, that ever stained the annals of this world?

When first the hallowed shout of "LIBERTY," so dear, so justly dear, to British hearts, was wafted across the waves, from shores whence such a sound was never heard before, all England hailed it with a brother's joy; and none with more sincere delight than Oldways. Indeed, so general, so almost universal, were the demonstrations of rapture, at what was then deemed the

triumph of the cause of freedom, that silence at such a moment seemed impiety to liberty. Yet there was one, who even then stood " silent, and still, and stern,"—and he was one, who filled a large space in the brilliant galaxy of patriotism and talents, which graced the mansion of the Duke of Lorn.

At one of the meetings of the select circle at his uncle's house, Oldways was present, together with the individual alluded to, when the new born freedom of France became the theme; and, of all the company, that individual alone withheld his approbation of the Revolution, " maintaining a sullen silence." He had ever been considered the most eloquent man of the party; forward, on almost all occasions, to put forth and to enforce his opinions; but, on this memorable evening, he obstinately remained a listener, with knitted brows and folded arms. As much, indeed, was gathered from this remarkable silence, as if

the orator had been his usual self; and his feelings, thus dumbly communicated, filled the whole circle with astonishment.

At length, the only person present who, in intellectual strength, could vie with him, addressed him: "Whence this reserve, dear ——? Surely, you must wish well to the cause of liberty, in every quarter of the globe?" The orator was roused.— "Who here doubts me? I flatter myself that I love a manly, moral, regulated liberty, as well as any gentleman of this assembly, be he who he will; and, perhaps, I have given as good proofs of my attachment to that cause, in the whole course of my public conduct. But I cannot stand forward to express my joy or sorrow, or to give praise or blame to anything which relates to human actions, and human concerns, on a simple view of the object, as it stands stripped of every relation, in all the nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstraction. Abstractedly speaking, govern-

ment, as well as liberty, is good. When I see the spirit of liberty in action, I see a strong principle at work; and this, at present, is all I can possibly know of French liberty. True;—the wild *gas*, the fixed air, is plainly broke loose: but I chuse to suspend my judgment, until the first effervescence is a little subsided; till the liquor is cleared, and until I see something deeper than the agitation of a troubled and frothy surface!"

He who uttered these words seldom spoke in vain. In the circle, of which he formed so influential a part, his opinions were customarily received as oracular decrees, and were most especially reverenced by the Duke of Lorn, who, through life, had been his patron and friend. This nobleman, actuated by principles of the most pure philanthropy, was unfortunately deficient in those intellectual energies, and acquirements, so indispensably requisite to the statesman. Mild, benevolent, just, and incorruptible, he was, on the other hand,

timid, wavering, and short-sighted; always inclining to measures of liberal and patriotic policy, but easily persuaded to relinquish them, by the agency of delusion or intrigue.

When, therefore, the eloquence of Burke was exerted to turn the torrent of public opinion from an enthusiastic admiration of the French Revolution, approaching to fanaticism, the Duke of Lorn tremblingly yielded up his own judgment to this powerful controller of his conscience. When, again, the energetic mind of Fox displayed its amazing powers for the first time in rivalry with Burke, and philanthropically struggled to preserve for the human species an equipoise between the extremes of anarchy and slavery, the Duke of Lorn turned, with an admiring and approving heart, to Fox. But, when the contest between fear and justice arrived at that crisis which peremptorily called for the last test of men's hearts and understandings, when Burke, from [illegible]

motive, hostilely turned his lance against the patriotic phalanx in which he had so long and honourably served, and ranging himself among those, who like feathers waved at the ministerial breath, scrupled not to revile and calumniate as fools and traitors all the intellect and worth of England, which continued to approve or sanction Fox ;—then, when decision could no longer be delayed, the Duke of Lorn, not without tears, separated himself and his adherents from that incorruptible man, whom, but a short period before, he had described as the only statesman that could save his country.

From that moment, the Duke was denominated the leader of a new party, which, under the title of Alarmists, comprised many of the members of both houses of Parliament, who having hesitated for a considerable time between their attachment to Mr. Fox, and their selfish fears, united [illegible] of his principles, and the

honesty of his measures, adopted, at first, a sort of armed-neutrality; but, ultimately, followed the example of Mr. Burke, and went over to the side of power.

The effects of these events on the character and fortunes of Mr. Oldways, were not precisely such as his uncle the Duke desired. Viewing the political horoscope with a degree of calmness too cold for the ardour of the staunch Foxites, and with an impartiality too independent for the tory-spirit of the Pittites, he became disgusted with politics altogether; and though family pride prevented his vacating his seat for the county, he relaxed greatly from his parliamentary duties, and passed the far greater part of his time at the Manor House.

Twenty years had now elapsed, since the partial secession of Mr. Oldways from Parliament. Oh, what an important period to England—to the world! Twenty years ago, Mr. Oldways, in point of influence,

was nearly the first gentleman in his county, and now he could scarcely command a majority of votes in any single district around him. The whole face of the neighbouring county had been changed as by magic; and the memory was racked to trace out the spot, where farms and cottages had stood, and the descendants of freeholders were only to be found by searching the war-office or the work house books. Instead of these old fashioned appendages to a country gentleman's domains, there had arisen, on one hand, as in scorn of the Old Manor house, a gew-gaw villa of a country banker; and, on the other, a new town, built on the sea coast, and denominated after its founder Flimflamton. In the same space of time, and much in the same proportion as this Flimflam influence and power increased, that of the mortified and vanquished Oldways depreciated; and, ere he saw the danger, he felt the magic power of wealth.

Born and bred the true old English gentleman; he possessed no particle of the trafficking spirit of the times. It never once occurred to him, that the revenues of his estate, were to be considered only as so much capital, with which he must carry on some speculation in grazing, or draining, or in cutting canals, or working mines, or building towns, or establishing country banks, or county fire offices; he never contemplated the necessity of engaging in such projects, to save himself from being overwhelmed by the effects of that power, which paper circulation imparted to every dealer in every article of general consumption.

From time immemorial, his ancestors had supported the splendour of their rank, and sustained the dignified hospitality of the Manor House, without resorting to rack rents or mortgages. The junior branches of the family had indeed formerly filled with honour, the highest stations in the church, the law, the navy, and the army;

at a time when the remunerations which the country allotted to these its honourable servants, were sufficient for the support of gentlemen, and gentlemen sought them accordingly.

The first lessons which Mr. Oldways learned in the science of modern finance, were forced on him by the alarming and unaccountable insufficiency of his rent-roll to meet his exigencies. It is true, that his lands were let at old rents; and he had steadily rejected all overtures from every species of speculators, who would have stripped his estates of a population that idolized his name and family. His aim and ambition had ever been to support the same noble and hospitable character which had graced his ancestors; but he had paid no contributions to gamesters,—he had raised no trophies to harlots, in palaces or equipages; nor squandered the revenues of years in a single feast, to catch a royal guest, and gain a courtier's garland.

"How, then," would he often exclaim, "how then has it happened, that in so frightful a ratio my expenditure has exceeded my income; that the surplus of my means has imperceptibly diminished, till, at length, a frightful deficiency has succeeded, while, for the same scale and style of living, my expences increase year after year in geometrical proportion." These practical hints at length opened to the eyes of Mr. Oldways the true cause of his situation; but his knowledge came too late to be of much avail to him, even if his gentlemanly spirit could have been subdued so low as to suffer him to turn trader; or his patriarchal feelings could have been so altered as to contemplate unmoved the ruin of his tenants by oppression. The alternative, however, was most painful. His benevolent heart was robbed of many joys by his inability to continue bounties where they had long been bestowed; and his ruling passion was subjected to almost

hourly mortification by the glaring contrasts of stately poverty, and splendid, though vulgar, opulence, exhibited in his own establishment, and that of his neighbour Flimflam. From the bold stare of the banker and his wife, down to the giggling leer of their lowest menial, in all near him, and in all around him, the mortified Oldways saw the reflection of the ludicrous exhibition of the "Poor Gentleman."

He continued, however, to bear up with, at least, apparent fortitude, against all the attacks of ignorant vanity, and to resist, with unshaken probity, all the overtures of political seduction; and endeavoured, by a rigid domestic economy, and a careful vigilance of his own concerns, to resist as long as possible the effects of a rapidly depreciating income.

Mr. Oldways was aided in this his honourable design both by his son and daughter. Charles was nearly thirty years old, and inherited much of the family pride of his

father. Miss Oldways was ten years younger than her brother; beautiful, accomplished, intelligent, and amiable. Lord St. Orville and Charles Oldways were acquaintances; and it was the present game of that young nobleman to convert the advantages of an intercourse with the brother, into the means of ingratiating himself with the sister; for St. Orville was in love with Miss Oldways.

The prosecution of this suit had carried him repeatedly to the Manor House; and the same object had inspired him with the ambition of becoming Lord of the Manor of Moreton, which would have added the claim of local influence to the scale of his pretensions; a circumstance which the peculiar situation of Mr. Oldways rendered of more than common value.

When, therefore, after being foiled in the purchase of Moreton Hall, he first received the overtures of Lyttleton, it is impossible to describe his joy at so fortunate and un-

expected a coincidence with his most ardent wishes, as their joint visit to Moreton; where he would thus return, if not Lord of the Manor of Moreton, at least prime minister and plenipotentiary of him, who was not only Moreton's Lord, but Lord of wealth that must make even Flimflam tremble at his opposition.

The attachment of St. Orville to Miss Oldways was alone confided to his sister-in-law, the Countess; and the sanction of her ladyship to his choice was without difficulty obtained; for she herself still secretly cherished a first love for the brother of her, who was now the object of St. Orville's passion.

To him, therefore, who thus almost miraculously appeared with the power of a magician on that spot, where the united views and wishes of both these personages were directed; to him, who seemed sent as the agent of some supernatural power, to turn the scale of influence at his will, to one

whose favour, in connection with their soul-cherished objects, was so essentially and so peculiarly important, what concession could either of them deny!

See, then, the clue to that condescension which caused a Countess, one of the first stars in fashion's hemisphere, to endure a journey of many miles in the same carriage with an old man taken from a work-house, and a young female refugee from a milliner's shop in Cheapside! Trace to the same cause the public sanction of the same Countess to these persons, at the most fashionable watering-place of the day, (for the grounds of Beaumont Hall, their intended residence, joined Flimflamton;) and then will be seen and felt how wonderful is the magic influence of wealth!

Even the lofty spirit which ruled the breast of Oldways, yielded unconsciously to the influence of that power, which was capable of shielding him from the mortifications which pride of ancestry endured

from want of wealth; and he internally rejoiced at the information, that Lyttleton, through the means of St. Orville, sought an introduction to the Manor House.

On the morning that the first visit of the new Lord of Moreton was expected, it was observed, that the Squire took especial pains in preparation to receive him. The Library was selected as the place of reception; and there were assembled on the occasion,

SCENE I.

Mr. Oldways, Charles Oldways, Miss Oldways, Lord St. Orville, and Lyttleton.

Mr. O. (*Bowing formally to Lyttleton.*) Welcome, Sir, to the Manor House. Allow me to introduce to you, my son, Charles Oldways, and Miss Oldways, my daughter, forming, with myself, all the branches left

of a family which, I may say without vanity, ranks among the most ancient in this county. Lord St. Orville, I am proud to see you. The honour of this visit I owe to your Lordship.

Lyttleton. I have a presentiment, Mr. Oldways, (ceremonials apart,) that neither you nor I shall have hereafter to blame my young friend for the introduction we owe to him. Miss Oldways and her brother will, I hope, favour me with their unprejudiced good-will until the stranger becomes, at least, an acquaintance; for you perceive I come to Moreton without one solitary letter of recommendation.

Mrs. O. (*smiling.*) But you bring with you, Mr. Lyttleton, as I am given to understand, a number of letters of credit; and you will find great wealth, Sir, the most powerful of all recommendations to nine-tenths of the *modern* gentry in all parts of England. I confess, however, that a man's riches are no passport with me; but to my

neighbour Flimflam, the Banker, and, indeed, to the owner of almost every seat around us, only let it be known, that Mr. Lyttleton is immensely rich, and Mr. Lyttleton will have tickets for *déjeunes*, fetes, dinners, and *petit soupers*, for every day in the year.

Lyttleton. Long estranged as I have been from the soil of England, I have, nevertheless, been an attentive observer of all that has happened here. The changes which have taken place in English manners have not been unmarked by me; and, of course, I am not ignorant of the inroads which commercial wealth has made upon rank and ancestry; and that consequent alteration in the state of society, which cannot fail of producing, one day or other, great political results.

Mr. O. Most undoubtedly! Yet, such is the infatuation of the present hour, that the million see nothing good in any thing but commerce; by commerce all is

to be estimated, that concerns the welfare of the state: nay, we are absolutely forbidden to believe, that in commerce alone are combined all the prime ingredients and constituent essences of our country's greatness. What matters it to the mob of money dealers and trafficking adventurers, that the dignity and influence of our nobility are mouldering away; and that the genuine race of English country gentlemen is almost supplanted by upstart citizens bloated with the gains of trade, but destitute of all pretensions to the manners, education, habits, or feelings, which should characterise the independent inheritor of manorial rights and riches. Sordid, silly calculators! the dilapidation of the chief pillars of the state is a subject only for their derision; whilst, in their estimation, the mere apprehension of remote danger to an absurd and self-destroying monopoly of commerce, is a cause, not only for national alarm, but a justification of all the horrors and all the ills of war.

Lyttleton. "A justification of the horrors and the ills of war!" Pardon me, Sir, you coldly speak of what you have not seen! In books, in speeches, these words—" the horrors and the ills of war"—may finely round a period of the writer or the orator; but as mere cadences of sound, they cannot touch the heart; they strike no chord of sympathy: for the pen's most potent magic, the utmost efforts of eloquence itself, have not the power to shew to the happy people of a bloodless soil, the direful import of those words, which they so often read and hear! Had you beheld, as I have, the actual scenes which form the horrid drama, "WAR," you would with me exclaim, that not upon the earth, nor among the sons of earth, must be sought the origin or authors of infernal horrors, of unnatural and demoniac murders.

But we will not pursue this theme.

Mr. O. It is a painful one.—Yet, Sir,

unhappily for the world, the evil has now endured for so long a period, that though, as I understand, you have been almost a perpetual traveller, I fear your views of society in Europe must have been principally confined to camps and warriors.

Lyttleton. Many, many years, I have been a wanderer; many and various have my adventures been—I have dwelt in courts, and camps; in groves of science, and in marts of commerce; I have mingled in discourse with the pious fathers of the Vatican; and I have disputed with most of the philosophers, economists, and encyclopædists of the Continent. The madmen of France, and the dreamers of Germany, have equally confided to me their delusions and reveries. In fact, all Europe is familiar to me: the secrets of most of its courts have been my amusements. America, Africa, and Asia, I have visited: and, having studied man in every quarter of the globe he moves

upon, hither, in my old age, after a long and distant pilgrimage I come, hoping to find repose on one little spot, which is endeared to me above all the earth besides, by a thousand fond attachments, tender ties, and earliest recollections!

Charles Oldways. You are then a native of Moreton, Sir?

Lyttleton. I have not said so, Sir. I see enquiries in all your faces, but, at present, let me beg your patience. My Lord St. Orville will tell his friends, that I am a man of mystery, and, in my fancies, somewhat arbitrary. Therefore, until I deem the time arrived, when with propriety I may throw off the mantle of concealment, allow me to be the catechist for my own information, and hereafter your curiosity shall in turn receive from me its amplest satisfaction. To put you to the test at once.—I take for granted, that you, of course, have all of you seen the late mansion of Sir Godfrey Bradshaw, which, I

was grieved to learn, has been demolished by your neighbour Flimflam, to enlarge his park and pleasure-grounds.

Mr. O. Sir Godfrey was the friend of my youth, and there was not a room in Bradshaw Hall which I could not as well describe, as I could this in which we are now sitting.

Lyttleton (with energy.) That's fortunate—most fortunate.

Lyttleton had his remarkable trunk with him, and now drawing a gold key from his bosom, which was tied to a ribband round his neck, he applied it to the lock, and at the same time touching a secret spring, the lid flew open. The whole party remained in silent expectation; but St. Orville, who knew the mystery attached to the trunk, felt the keenest curiosity. Lyttleton took from the trunk a port-folio, containing some drawings, and presenting to Mr. Oldways the

first of them, said, "Is this drawing anything like the exterior of Bradshaw Hall?" The whole party vociferated in the affirmative; and "How exact a representation!" "What a beautifully finished drawing!" "What a pity to pull down so fine a specimen of ancient architecture!" and similar expressions, were suffered to pass without observation by Lyttleton; as he was sufficiently impressed from memory, with the conviction of the truth of this drawing; having, when a child, seen the building, though he had never entered its gates.

He then took out another drawing, saying, "Will any of you tell me if you recollect such an apartment as this."

Miss Oldways. Oh yes, certainly; it is the library. How perfect a resemblance!

Charles Oldways. And with what skilful effect it is executed!—The perspective is excellent!—The finishing of the gothic bookcase between the windows is admirable!—

But I do not remember that table with the globes upon it.

Miss Oldways. I do, perfectly. I recollect admiring the tapestry covering of the table. But who is that lady with a book in her hand, sitting so contemplative, with her elbow on the table. It is certainly a portrait in miniature. Is it Lady Bradshaw, Papa, I never saw her—for you know, Charles, the family had been many years abroad when we looked over the Hall?

Mr. Oldways. (*Examining the drawing most minutely.*) Gracious Heavens, Mr. Lyttleton!—But I will at present repress my feelings!

Lyttleton. We shall see this lady anon in a different situation. The drawing, then, reminds you of the library?

Charles Oldways. It is really the thing itself.

Lyttleton. What room is this? (*shewing another drawing.*)

Charles Oldways. Oh! the ball room. Observe how exactly the old-fashioned silver chandeliers are copied. See the same lady that was represented in the library! Here she is sitting at the harpsichord.

Mr. Oldways. Mr. Lyttleton—Sir—Excuse me, but—I could have wished that these drawings had been shewn to me in private.

Lyttleton. These sketches do but form the text, Mr. Oldways; our commentaries, if you wish so, shall be more private. (*Taking out a fourth drawing*) This would seem a chapel; but that there is a door into an interior apartment, with a bed in view.

Miss Oldways. It was called the Oratory. And you may remember, Charles, Mrs. Sparks the housekeeper, kept us there so long describing the paintings, and pointing out the cushion on which her dear lady used to kneel;—and see, here is the magnificent prayer book about which she told us such a long story.

Lyttleton. (*Eagerly*) Is Mrs. Sparks still living?

Mr. Oldways. (*In an under tone of voice*) We will speak of her hereafter—alone.

Lord St. Orville. Here again we see the same lady at her orisons.—She must be the heroine of the series. How lovely an air of devotion the artist has given her!

Mr. Oldways (*eagerly to Lyttleton.*) Is that artist living?

Lyttleton. (*In an under tone*) We will speak of him hereafter—alone. Now one more. (*Shewing another drawing.*) This I suppose to be the chamber adjoining the oratory?

Miss Oldways. The very bed that we saw there; crimson damask, with gold fringe. But there appears to be a story pictured here; look, papa, observe that old lady, how very like Mrs. Sparks!. She is making signs to that gentleman, who is too young and too much agitated for a doctor, apparently to prevent his approach-

ing the bed. The curtains are drawn close round; and by the countenance and attitude of the gentleman, one would imagine that some relative or friend had just expired.

Lyttleton. Up to this scene, then, there is no deception. So far so well. I have another drawing here, but that is of an apartment, which you have *not* seen. I presume so, at least. It is the family mausoleum.

Mr Oldways. I have seen it. It is still in existence. Bradshaw was extra parochial, and had a chapel of its own, which now forms a picturesque object, as a ruin, in the park of Flimflam Lodge. Under the altar in that chapel there is a spacious vault.—

Lyttleton (*Producing the drawing.*) Like this?

Mr. Oldways. As far as memory serves me, the very same. But what is meant to be narrated here? A coffin, with the lid re-

moved; the habiliments of the dead thrown carelessly on the earth, as if a corpse once shrouded, had arisen to life! A torch is burning near the entrance of the vault, while the light of day, peering down upon the gloomy scene, indicates, that the portals of the cemetry have been left unclosed! Mr. Lyttleton! Mr. Lyttleton! by what fatality, by what necromancy, I had almost said, came this pictured history in your keeping? You overpower me with surprise—I almost doubt the reality of what I see and touch coming so marvelously before me.

Lyttleton. Hereafter you shall know all; at present, however marvellous and ambiguous I myself may seem, let not incredulity make you blind to facts, merely because they come before you as a tale of wonder. The every-day transactions of our lives, were they not repetitions of every day, would strike us as most marvellous.—Events, that are uncommon, seem monstrous to

weak minds; but to weak minds only. —The man, who can contemplate, will ever recollect, that all that happens, happens by the operation of the same invisible power. To that same power must be traced the smallest dew-drop, that e'er gems the tenderest leaf of vegetation; no less than the tremendous bursting of electric fires from clouds of thunder, which shake the globe we stand on. As in the natural, so in the moral world—the familiar events and intercourses of society, the chaffering and barterings, the births, the marriages, the sicknesses, and the deaths of every hour, pass by us without notice, like a summer cloud; but the usurpations of thrones, and the revolutions of empires, excite our special wonder. So, that which appears romantic, may, nevertheless, be real. I say thus much, Sir, that you may dismiss all apprehension, I cannot so far forget either what is due to my own dignity, or your respect, as to descend to practise mum-

meries. Having explained myself thus far, we will dismiss the matter for the present, and with submission, pass to other and lighter subjects.—Flimflamton, for instance:—To-morrow I expect the arrival of my lively friend, the Countess St. Orville. *Apropos*, I must tell you, Mr. Oldways, that she brings with her, to Beaumont Hall, two other specimens of the romantic, each sufficient in itself to set me down in common estimation, for as perfect a model of *knights-errant* as even the power of Cervantes himself could place before you. But they shall speak for themselves. The preliminaries of this morning I hope, will lead to a permanent treaty of friendship and friendly intercourse between the Manor House and Moreton Hall, and that we shall meet frequently. It is my intention to repair the Hall immediately; I shall, therefore, spend sometime at Flimflamton, which, I am told, is now the focus of what is called the Fashionable World. As

studying characters is one of my favourite amusements, I am glad of this; for it is much pleasanter to me to view this *fantocini* of fashionables on the small stage of a watering-place; than to endure the fatigue of playing follow my leader over the larger theatre of London.—To you, Sir, to Miss Oldways, and her brother, I venture to look for some assistance in my view of the shew.

The reply of Mr. Oldways was characteristic; "he thanked Mr. Lyttleton sincerely, but he mixed very little with the mob of people, that nowadays contrive to jumble themselves together without discrimination of rank or character, under the assumed uniform of fashion; he, nevertheless, occasionally passed a few days at Flimflamton, and should certainly avail himself of the overtures of a gentleman of so much experience, and knowledge of the world, as Mr. Lyttleton,

for the advantage of his son and daughter, still more than on his own account."

No further hint relative to Bradshaw Hall or family then transpired; and, after a few common-place compliments, the party broke up.

CHAPTER V.

SCENE 1.

"BEHOLD Flimflamton!" said the Countess St. Orville to Mr. White, as the carriage turned the corner of a green lane, and that paragon of all modern marine resorts came in view.

Mr. White. Have we then passed the village of Thistleton, where, as I told your Ladyship, I spent several of my youthful summers?

Countess. This spot was once called Thistleton.

Mr. White. Amazing! Where then is the steeple and tower of Thistleton church? What has become of the old Fort? Where are the fishermen's dwellings that dotted the coast? To the left

too — all gone — all changed. — Gracious Heavens! Surely hereabouts stood Sir Thomas Alder's noble mansion! — This road must have skirted the park wall. In the space, which my eye now scans, I am sure there, then, stood a score or two of cottages, besides several farm-houses—all vanished.—And instead of these objects, what metamorphoses are here! Stones for grass—chimneys for trees—a crowded town, instead of a retired village.—Alas! Alas! What antics and vagaries, in his short game of life, fantastic man contrives to play!

The carriage wheels now clattered through the streets of Flimflamton, and the Countess most affably pointed out to Mr. White and Emma Clarendon, the different buildings, as they passed them.— "The Hotel," — "The Library," — "The Baths,"—"The Concert Rooms," —"Assembly Rooms," — "The Theatre," —"The Chapel,—and the Bank."

"The what! my Lady," said Mr. White, with an accent of surprise.

Countess. The Bank.

Mr. White. The Bank! I do not comprehend.

Countess. The Flimflamton Bank—so the building's called,—and I perceive, this season it is, for the first time, opened.

In the corner of the landau, the Rev. Mr. Flirt had for some time yawned silently. He caught the echo, and drawled out, "The Bank! Eh!—O-a-h!—I understand,—Flimflam's Bank—a clever fellow that—a monstrous—great—convenience and accommodation—it was much wanted here.

Mr. White. Do I hear rightly? The establishment of a Bank wanted in the hamlet of Thistleton! Wanted here—may I ask by whom? For what?

Mr. Flirt. Very odd questions those—who does *not* want a banker? How could one possibly raise the supplies without such aid? There would be no carrying on

the war among gentlemen, without the agency of these dealers in, and negotiators of, the ways and means.

Mr. White. I am still in the dark.

Mr. Flirt. No wonder. You have not of late lived with the enlightened—I am sure I mean no severity of remark; but in the place,—the residence,—the asylum, (what shall I call it?) where your latter years have been spent, it is not to be supposed you *could* see, what the world *is.*—Your notions of things, Mr. Wilkie, or Mr. White,—I think your name is—must have been imbibed in times immensely dissimilar to our æra!

Countess. Waving all allusion to the misfortunes of Mr. White, (which I hope never to hear repeated,) it must certainly be admitted, that to a merchant of the old school, so long withdrawn from the active world as he has been, many of the systems of modern times must be quite incomprehensible.

Mr. White. I own, my Lady, that the old-fashioned notion, which "the Bank" conveys to my mind, rendered its association with a petty hamlet of cottagers and fishermen, ludicrous in the extreme. What superflous cash can there be in a place like this?

Mr. Flirt. Superflous cash! What an odd idea! Whoever thought of such a phenomenon? Your notion of a Bank then, is, that it is opened as a sort-of-a-kind-of receptacle for the overflowings of people's pockets: that is to say, a place of safe custody, for the deposit of such money as folks happen to have no immediate occasion for.

Mr. White. That is my notion of a Bank.

Mr. Flirt. You were right, then, in calling it an old-fashioned notion. I believe, originally, in former times, that is to-say, a hundred years ago, that was really what was understood to be the intention of a

Bank; but Lord help you, my good Sir, its very clear you have been many years in a work—in the dark.

Countess. Yes, Sir, Chaplain is right; yon are woefully in the dark, and you must have recourse to some of the new lights, before your common sense will be able to understand *things as they are;* which, without such aid, will appear ridiculous paradoxes to your unenlightened mind. For instance, Chaplain himself has no superflous cash.—Have you, Chaplain? And yet Chaplain has more than one banker.—Haven't you, Chaplain?

Mr. Flirt. Charming raillery; but seriously the thing is so—precisely so.—It is one of the modern discoveries, and infinitely more useful than any of Sir Humphry Davy's. Formerly, in your time, Mr. Vile, (I beg your pardon, Mr. White, I believe it is.)—In the dark age, when you were a merchant, bankers were scarce articles, and were as nice and squeamish as the Bank of England itself. Your queer old Dons of that

day, your Childs, and your Walpoles, were as *income-at-able* as Abraham Newland. In such dull and stupid times, it would have puzzled those perriwig-pated gentlefolks beyond all power of extrication, had it been attempted to explain to them, that their best customers were such as my patroness describes your humble servant to be, customers without cash; persons, who have nothing to do with cash, but who simply borrow their banker's credit; and pay them a quarter or a half per cent. not for their money, but for the mere use of their names.

Mr. White. I begin to be enlightened. You mean to say, that the discovery of a new application of the operations of credit, has superseded the use of cash; and that, therefore, bankers are to be considered chiefly in the light of guarantees; and are not now stake-holders, as they were in my time.

Countess. Take care, gentlemen, if you

probe the subject much deeper in this vein, I am afraid you will come to conclusions, not generally recognised. Is not he, who becomes a guarantee without holding stakes, something very like a wagerer himself, for if the bet be lost, and loser cannot pay, he that is security for him, becomes liable. Here, then, is a risk, at least a chance, of loss. You surely do not mean to hold, that the profession of a banker is one of hazard?

Mr. White. In my time, such a notion would have been deemed preposterous; what may be the case now, I cannot answer. I have heard that it is not uncommon, that a banker is also a merchant or a trader. In the dark dull ages, which his Reverence speaks of, we placed our idle cash in a banker's custody, without interest, rather than trust it at a premium with men in trade; because trade involves chance at all times, and the most honest merchant may, by possibility, become even bankrupt. But, if the line of demarcation be with-

drawn, as I am told it is, and bankers are all sorts of merchants, and all kinds of traders; I own, I cannot see why bankers *of that species* are entitled to my confidence without interest, any more than the merchant or trader simply so called.

Mr. Flirt. Well argued, Mr. Withers, Mr. White, I mean—a true conclusion—there can be no cause for confidence without interest; and rely upon it, Sir, that very little confidence without interest is now-a-days bestowed. But, mark the difference between the present æra, and your dull times. Englishmen, at that period, might very well possess what you call idle cash; for they could obtain nothing, safely and certainly, for its temporary use;—they had no omnium at 30 per cent.; no superabundance of Exchequer or Navy bills; no snug 20 per cent. *continuations* at the Stock Exchange. Too cold to project schemes themselves,—men at that time hoarded, till the speculations of others afforded sure profits. Bankers, indeed, were then the holders of idle capitals;

for then there was superflous cash.— But now, when the world is awake, Mr. Williams, when Loan jostles Loan out of market; and *new* and *old omnium* confuse even jobbers and brokers: when *little lottery* treads on the heels of lottery just drawn: — when engineers powers rival Harlequins' swords, and tunnels and archways, and bridges, appear and vanish like pantomime scenes;—when theatres are burnt down, and rebuilt in a season:—when water works and iron pipes abound to inundation:—and gas-light and heat-works threaten conflagration:—when villages are metamorphosed into watering-places;—and watering-places become the courts of Princes;—who can be so dead to self-interest, as to look tamely on at this scramble for profits, while the price of a ten pound share in any of these tempting speculations lies idle in the hands of his banker. There are no such cold codgers at this time of day—on the contrary, there

is scarcely a clerk in the city, or an exciseman in the provinces, who, for the purpose of a little bit of *spec* in one or other of these fascinating schemes, does not find out some friend to accept his accommodation bills; and some town or country banker to discount them.

Countess. How came you initiated in these mysteries, Chaplain? You are absolutely an adept. But you have not yet explained to Mr. White the use, or the design rather, of the Flimflamton Bank.

Mr. White, I thank your Ladyship, but the clue is sufficient; I acknowledge myself enlightened, by even the short exposition which his Reverence has given of the principles of the modern system of banking;—their application to the practice is easy. I perceive the tables are turned, since I was in trade. Then, it was necessary for a banker to possess wealth, in order to obtain credit; it is now only necessary that he possess credit, to obtain wealth. For since the spirit of speculation has taken a

flight beyond the utmost bounds of real capital, the speculators, as well buyers as sellers, must, of necessity, be satisfied with a guarantee of credit in its place. Bankers then become the issuers of these guarantees, and the price at which they part with their responsibility, is frequently the sole intrinsic value of their pledge. It follows that, in such a state of things, credit, caution, and judgment, are all the stock in trade requisite to the Banker; who, ceasing to be the stake-holder, as heretofore, is simply the coiner and assayer of other men's wealth, giving to it the means of circulation by his name. Thus I can easily conceive, that country banks, being a species of local mint, to whose coin universal consent gives currency, must be profitable concerns to their owners, wherever established; and I no longer marvel at the Flimflamton Bank.

The carriage now stopped at the gates of the Park of Beaumont Hall, which joined the New Chapel. This building was the last in Flimflamton, and served to mark the boundaries of the Beaumont and Flimflam estates.

CHAPTER III.

It was now "*the season for watering-places,*" or in other words, it was the period of the year, when that tormenting disease, peculiar to the climate of England, "*the Domophobia,*" rages with all its violence. Foreigners have expressed more surprize at the effects of this distemper, upon our females especially, than at any other singularity which marks the national character.

When they behold the happiness of an English fireside, where reigns that tranquil felicity which we express by the word, COMFORT; a state of feeling not to be described in any other language than our own; when they perceive the attractions of "Home," a magnet which operates upon all ranks and

classes of English society, each home drawing towards itself some share of the hearts of all, so that the whole population of the empire might be numbered by its domestic circles; they are eager to exclaim —" What magic must there be in an English home! "

Anon—the first symptoms of *domophobia* appear; varying, in their demonstration, according to the modes of life and habits of the persons affected; for no rank is free from the contagion. In the higher circles it begins to be visible generally about June; but is sometimes later in its appearance, the movements of the court, or the sittings of the parliament, having a certain influence on the progress of the disease. The observing foreigner is now amazed at the changes he every where perceives. In all parties, the chief conversation consists of—" When do you leave town? Where do you summer this season? Are you stationary? Do you go to the

Lakes—Do you visit Brighton?—Have you secured a house at Flimflamton?" A few weeks more, and the phrases vary—"What, *you* are not on the wing yet? I am quite relieved to see your ladyship in town;—I absolutely began to consider myself a sort of scare-crow;—I fancied the people stared at me as they would at some ugly curiosity—but its always the way with the duke:—he contrives every season to keep one at home with his state affairs, till the town is absolutely depopulated." "My case precisely, your Grace—Would you believe it?—Lord Demibottle *grows so worse and worse stingy*, that he has actually made us a laughing stock by waiting for the expiration of an ironmonger's sojourn in a house at Flimflamton, because he can get *it a bargain!*—So that I am to endure the horrors of home in the height of the season, to obtain the *eclat* of succeeding Mr. and Mrs. Rumfordize and their little brood of braziers."

Such are the effects of this fashionable distemper upon its victims, that "Home" appears, not only to have lost its attraction, but to have undergone a change that renders it quite *horrible*; the poor sufferers enduring nearly similar torments at the sight of "Home," which the appearance of water produces upon the subjects of hydrophobia. But it is remarkable, that water has quite opposite effects in the two species of madness—in domophobia it allays, in hydrophobia it excites the irritability of the patient. It is still, however, very doubtful, notwithstanding this fact, whether domophobia be the origin of watering places, or whether these said watering places at first created, or now encourage, the continuance of the malady. However this point may be determined, there is no doubt, but that as watering places have increased, the disease domophobia has been more and more prevalent among all ranks of people.

Of all these modern *Fashion-traps*, Flim-

flamton was at the present epoch the most successful in its baits; and, consequently, contained a larger portion of the "Fashionable World," than any similar "decoy;" and, consequent again on that, a larger portion of the inferior classes, who ever follow where Fashion leads.

No wonder, therefore, that arrogance and extortion became the marking features of the Flimflamtonians, whether house and lodging owners, shopkeepers or victuallers, among whom the widow Wilkins, landlady of the "Hotel," was a most distinguished personage.

Lyttleton had, unfortunately, applied by mistake, to her rival, the widow Morris, who kept the "New Inn" opposite, for the terms of a retired cottage on the beach, which he wished to take for himself and Lancaster. He was informed by widow Morris, that it belonged to the "*woman over the way*;" and that she had been glad to get six guineas a week for it last sea-

son." "But," said widow Wilkins, when informed of this, "to let *that woman over the way* to know, that I am not to be dictated to by *her* in letting my house, though she has got none to let, I sha'nt take a farthing less for the cottage than ten guineas a week: and that I have refused to take from Madam Thingumme, the great singing woman, because I hates foreigners, for I makes it a point to know who's who before they step a foot into any of my houses, and I've got seven in this very place, all let at this here present moment, to real tip top gentry; for, though I have lost poor Mr. Wilkins, I'm not such a chick as to be pecked at, or crowed over, by that *woman over the way.*"

Lyttleton, while he smiled at the mixture of avarice, rivalry, and vulgar pride of the widow, agreed to become her tenant for the cottage, intending it principally as a place to which he could retire from the bustle of Beaumont Hall, in order to be

master of his own movements and his own time.

SCENE I.

A few days after this contract had been made, and about that hour of the day when the real gentry at a watering-place are taking their wine and fruit after dinner, and the mock gentry are rummaging their bundles for clean gowns and caps, cravats and pantaloons, to dress for the libraries, a chaise and pair drove up to the "Hotel," and one of the most grotesque figures imaginable alighted.

It was Charles Christopher Crisp, the apothecary. The style of Mr. Crisp's travelling dress was so different from his formerly-described suit, that Lyttleton himself would scarcely have recognized him. The lucky *job* of Lancaster's removal had been as profitable to him as jobs generally are to all commissioners, who have the plan and the purse at their own controul.

His old cocked-hat, and his medical cane, he had discarded — his thread-bare coat had become a perquisite to his apprentice, and behold him now a smart crop, with a round hat, blue frock coat, white waistcoat, and nankeen trowsers. Changed as was the dressing of the block, the wood remained the same, and widow Wilkins, whom experience had tutored, saw at a glance, that he was not "a prize worth her powder." Crisp, forming his estimate of characters from a narrow sphere of knowledge, imagined himself a pyramid of consequence compared with a mere landlady of an inn, and assumed a tone accordingly.

"Pray—this is the hotel—I want to know?"

Mrs. W. Very likely so, Sir,—but what's your want of knowledge to me—I don't keep a school?

Crisp. (*with a start and a stare*) School! —he—he—egad you're droll. — Sea air makes you sharp.

Mrs. W. Folks should be sharp, that *has* to do with sharpers.

Crisp. Don't understand you, Ma'am, this may be *marine* manners, but permit me to tell you, Ma'am, that you are speaking to——

Lord St. Orville, passing at that moment, tapped him on the shoulder, and finished the sentence by — "to you are speaking, Ma'am, to *C. C. Crisp, sole proprietor, inventor, and patentee of the celebrated Rosa Tinctura,* who did St. Orville the favour to witness a memorandum at Garraway's, for which he takes the present opportunity of returning his most grateful acknowledgments."

Crisp. (*Twirling his hat round in the face of Mrs. Wilkins, who had curtesied very low to his Lordship*) My Lord, your Lordship humbles me to the dust. I am the luckiest son of Æsculapius in thus again encountering your Lordship. Lord—my Lord—what a pretty place this Flimflam-

ton is!—Pray, my Lord, if it is not asking too great a favour, would you do me the kindness only just to ask Mrs. Crisp, and Polly, and Manassah, how they do. Mrs. Crisp never spoke to a Lord in her life—there they are, in that post chaise. You know, I dare say, my Lord, that I had the job to bring Mr. Lancaster down here, and it was such an opportunity for Mrs. Crisp and the children to see this fashionable place, that all the world talks about, that we could not let it pass.

It was impossible to resist, and St. Orville moved towards the chaise, but Crisp ran before him.

Crisp. My dear, don't be *dashed*—but I have met a Lord, a friend of mine, here, Lord St. Orville—and he's coming to pay his compliments;—Polly, Manassah, hold up your heads.

As St. Orville approached the carriage, Lancaster reclined back to avoid being noticed; but the Earl caught a glimpse at

his face, and without saying one word to the Crisp party, walked quite round the chaise to the other door, and, opening it himself, examined, with evident surprise, the features of Lancaster. Lancaster, recovering from equal surprise, placed his handkerchief to his face;—St. Orville remained silent, and the Crisps were dumb with amazement. After a short pause of recollection, the Earl said, " is Mr. Lancaster capable of walking a few steps?"

Without a moment's hesitation, Lancaster motioned his intention of alighting, and pushing down the step with his foot, quitted the chaise, and accompanied the Earl towards Lyttleton's cottage.

SCENE II.

Crisp. More marine manners I suppose! Why now, if any one but a Lord had behaved so unpolitely to you, my dear Polly—I should have set it down for the rudest thing in the world.

Mrs. Crisp. Christopher! Christopher *I* am not at all easy about your goings on— if I find you out deceiving me—but I can not believe *that*—you dare not think of such a thing—and yet your story about this moping young man—and that strange gentleman with his riches and treasures, almost staggers my belief.—Kit Crisp! Kit Crisp! take care what you are about, this Lancaster may be a great genius and poet and all that, as you say he is,—and that rude fellow, that takes no more notice of me than a post, may be a Lord as you call him—but mind you're not made a fool and a dupe of, Kit Crisp. What if your old man, and your genius—and your ill-behaved Lord, prove sham Abrahams,—and turn out a part of a gang of swindlers? I know those sort of gentry make these watering places their head quarters—and a very pretty figure you'd cut, Mr. Crisp, to have your name and profession disgraced, by being put in all the newspapers with such fellows.

Crisp. Why, my dear Polly, you have got the Blue devils! Impose upon me! Poh! Impossible! Do you think I don't know Lord St. Orville the minor? Besides, have I not had the best possible proofs? Haven't I touched the *ready*; and am I not going to meet the rich stranger himself? I have no doubt that we shall be asked to spend some days at Moreton Hall.

Mrs. Crisp. Time will shew, but pray am I to be stuck here in the chaise all day to be stared at. See, your genius and your lord are walking off out of sight?

Crisp. Shall the chaise follow them, dearest, or— stay, let me look at the direction in the letter (taking out a letter, and reading) enquire at the Hotel for the '*Cottage on the Beach*,'—aye, do Mr. Postboy, enquire at the hotel for the cottage on the beach—for, pestle me if I encounter that *Patagonian* landlady again.

SCENE III.

As he spoke, a pale thin female advanced towards the chaise, whom, upon a nearer approach, he recognised to be Miss Arabella Perryman of Cheapside. Mutual exclamations of surprise—Lord, Ma'am, are *you here?*—Lord, Sir, are *you here?*—in the usual style of Cockneys, who meet at a distance from London, ensued, and then followed a history of the events which had brought each to Flimflamton.

Miss Perryman. Well, it may be all right, Mrs. Crisp, but you must allow it is a mysterious affair.

Mrs. Crisp. Just what I've been saying, Ma'am.

Miss Perryman. Well, let them look to it, for they'll be well watched I can tell 'em; I wouldn't have it go any further, but my brother arrived here in the mail only this morning, and he has got instructions, aye, and authorities too, that some folks little dream of. Mr. Peter Perryman,

though not a common-council man himself, has great influence in our ward, and one of the council, who owes his election entirely to my brother, never conceals any political or city news from him, and Mr. Perryman often gives him a hint in return. And so, Ma'am, the whole story of this stranger's coming to our house, and his mysterious trunk, and his wonderful riches, was communicated by my brother to Mr. deputy Moveall. The deputy, you must know, has the ear of one of the ministers at his command; for nothing passes in the corporation that Moveall has not an opportunity of reporting to certain great folks, who like to know how the cat jumps among the citizens. Some people sneer at him, and call his activity fetching and carrying; and certain city orators very often attack him in the council as a time-server; but Moveall can speechify in his turn, and while the opposite party have all their talk for no-

thing, he has found out on which side his bread is buttered.

Crisp. But as to your brother's instruction and authority, with respect to this Lyttleton?

Miss Perryman. Why, Sir, I am not at liberty to say all I know; but I can tell you, that it was no news to government to be informed of this strange fellow's story and arrival. He is known, and he is watched:—Mr. Flimflam and my brother have had some meetings on the business; but when there is occasion, Mr. Perryman can be as close as wax.—I suppose, Sir, you and Mrs. Crisp mean to make some stay now you are here, though I don't know whether you will get even a single bed-room. I sha'nt ask you to my hole of a lodging, for one is obliged to put up with what one can get in these places,—but we shall meet often at the libraries.

A servant from the cottage now came

rived, and in pursuance of his directions, the chaise was dismissed, and the Crisp family took up their abode, not at "The Hotel with widow Wilkins," but with "the *woman over the way*," at the New Inn.

SCENE IV.

Lord St. Orville and Lancaster walked on silently until they reached the beach: St. Orville then said, "We are now so near the cottage, I forbear, Sir, to give expression to my feelings until we arrive there. In perfect privacy, and when you, as well as myself, are recovered from the effects of our mutual surprise, I trust I shall receive a satisfactory explanation of the extraordinary circumstances, which occurred twelvemonths ago, when for the first and last time we saw each other."

Lancaster. My Lord—I think—I believe—indeed, I am determined—yes, my Lord, I am resolved not to enter the cottage.

St. Orville. How, Sir!—relinquish an asylum so nobly offered you—abandon a patron so disinterested, so liberal, so powerful, as Lyttleton—wherefore?

Lancaster. To avoid you, my Lord!

St. Orville. Nay, then, Sir, it is expedient that I should press you *now.*—But I am prevented;—Mr. Lyttleton has observed us from the window of the cottage, and approaches to meet us.

Lancaster. Let me return, my Lord!—(*To himself.*) Return! Oh, whither?—Lost—lost—homeless, friendless wretch! whither shall I wander?—

St. Orville. Keep your own secret, Sir, and I engage, upon my honour, to spare your feelings. You may be innocent—bad company is a ground of suspicion; but, I grant, is not of itself sufficient evidence of guilt.: I will not touch upon this subject before your benefactor. By the time we next meet, you must decide, whether you will explain yourself unreservedly, or not.

Demonstrate to me your innocence, and it will make me happy; otherwise, justice will compel me to disclose my fears to Mr. Lyttleton.

Lancaster. Your fears!—That word, my Lord, implies existence of your hopes—that I am innocent—I breathe again.

St. Orville. I were a scoundrel indeed, if, with a *conviction* in my mind, that in reality you were the willing instrument of titled swindlers, the wretched agent of confederated robbers of the worst description, I could see you enter my friend's dwelling, and not sound an alarm. 'Tis true, I am not at my ease, even while mere appearances remain so strong against you; with no better plea than your own assertion, that they are deceptive. Still, I own my heart inclines, I scarcely can tell why, to prompt a thousand doubts in your behalf. Why will you not second them, and at once allay suspicion!

Lancaster. Would that I could, my Lord,

—but now it is not possible—the time I hope *will* come; and until that time arrives, I feel I ought to shun your Lordship's presence.

SCENE V.

Lyttleton. (who had now joined them.) Thanks to your Lordship, for this kind attention to my friend. Mr. Lancaster, I rejoice to see you so much recovered; I trust the air of Flimflamton will complete the restoration of your health.—Your spirits seem depressed — you are fatigued by your journey—take my arm; —nay, I insist you do.—Silence! don't try your oratorical abilities till you get stronger; but where is our medical merry-andrew, Mr. Crisp?

St. Orville. Egad, Sir, we shall have Flimflamton in an uproar. Not only has *C. C. Crisp, the sole proprietor, inventor, and patentee, of the celebrated Rosa Tinctura,* bestowed the honour of his own pre-

sence upon us, but Mrs. Crisp and Master Crisp, and a whole cargo of little Crisps were crammed into the chaise, and are now waiting in the High Street for further orders.

Lyttleton. Will you, my Lord, favour me so far as to send him directions to take up his abode at one of the inns, and let your servant tell him, that to-morrow I will see him.

St. Orville. I'll take care of the *Proprietor.* Mr. Lancaster, adieu—our interview has been short, our acquaintance is imperfect; I trust, indeed I hope, we shall both be better satisfied with each other, ere a week has rolled over our heads.

Lyttleton. You are acquainted, then?

St. Orville. We once met, at the house of a *common* acquaintance—but I must fly, they wait for me at Beaumont Hall.

CHAPTER IV.

SCENE I.

LANCASTER, who, during the last scene, had several times essayed to speak, but each time had only hesitatingly muttered some inarticulate and incoherent sounds, felt extreme relief when Lyttleton, having conducted him to an apartment in the cottage, and having urged him to take some refreshment, which was placed there, retired, leaving him alone.

Weak from the still lingering effects of disease; heart-sick with the keen disappointment of youthful visions; stung with remorse for many indiscretions of a careless life, one striking incident among which, St. Orville had most painfully revived in his memory; wavering, through want of

firmness of purpose, between dread of penury and detestation of dependance; Lancaster, naturally bold and vivid in his conceptions, but timid and slow to embody them by action, thus breathed his thoughts aloud; and felt his bosom lightened and relieved by unheard converse with himself.

(*Lancaster alone.*) Why am I here?—In what quality have I entered this cottage?—As a poor alms-taker!—Alas, where on the wide world can I make a better claim? At what gate, however lowly, have I a *right* to knock? Who owns *me*—who cares for *me*—who ever bestows a moment's thought on *me*?—A solitary—useless—miserable—interloper in society; no calling, no profession, no *caste* whatever—calls me fellow! Oh how I have dreamed! Would I could still dream on, and, living, be unconscious to life's realities.—But, no, the trance is ended—I wake—I see—I feel!—The airy phan-

toms of imagination no more have power to charm;—abstraction's theories can no more delude my mind!

Angels, from their abodes above, may muse upon the scenes of this our lower world: but man is born for action. Society has a right to the exertions of all its members. What, then, have I done for society,—what contribution of labour or ingenuity, or of defence, have I afforded to the common stock, or common safety? Nothing—nothing!—All that is passed of life is, in regard to me—blank—blank!

The future——what can I do?—Loaded with obligations to a disdainful and irreconcileably offended relative, I fell from the sphere of life in which, with careless gaiety, I moved; and fell lower than it is the lot of many to descend to. Now rescued by a stranger's eleemosynary aid from penury and death, will he not claim me for his ransomed slave, and watch and judge me with a master's privilege? Even now

my lips desire to thank him, as my heart does warmly;—but the very phrase and fashion of my speech grow matter of perplexity to my mind, least inadvertently I should offend where I so ardently aspire to please.

This is the bitter curse of a dependent state!—No action can be spontaneous—the tongue must wear a chain—the eyes be centineled, each motion must be made with trembling care; and man, "*In form and attitude how like an Angel, in comprehension how like a God!*" must meanly crouch and fawn, and fetch and carry, and play all sorts of antics, like dancing-dogs, or muzzled bears, that are starved and tortured into performances revolting to their natures, for the profit or the pleasure of their keepers!

I will not be this thing;—no, no, it is not yet too late—to labour?——Alas, this frame wants strength—these arms, these limbs,—nature is ashamed of them.

Well, then; my mind shall work, my talents be exerted, my genius——what!——dream again!—Oh, Lancaster—beware—beware!—So soon have you forgotten the work-house pallet, where mind, and talents, and genius were laid, nothing-worth, on the same level with the humblest and most helpless of the parish poor!

Have I, then, no free choice?—Must I of necessity receive, as bounty, the food and shelter which I cannot earn?

What if I accept the liberality of this Lyttleton on something like conditions—Suppose I suffer him to pay my present debts, and to advance a sum sufficient to enable me to resume my former studies?—I then qualify myself for my intended profession—I pursue it with energy;—I succeed—I become eminent;—and accumulate prodigious wealth.—I can then repay the loan with interest—and thus, in a pecuniary sense at least, cancel the obligation.—This would be glorious!—It will

indeed require years of assiduity, of active, persevering industry to accomplish such a triumph—but still it may be done.

Doubtless, there will be many obstacles to overcome; one, and that not the least, is the mortification I shall suffer on my re-appearance among that *set*, which I have so much cause to execrate. The satirical sarcasms of one, the freezing neglect of another, the gross remarks of a third, are appalling anticipations; to say nothing of the danger of a relapse into habits of indolence, extravagance, and depravity.

And after all, I cannot think that I am formed for a physician!—Then, again, success in medical pursuits is, above all others, such a lottery!—Perchance, however, a lucky experiment upon the nervous system of some duchess of fashion, or the discovery of a specific for meliorating the decrepitude of some old libertine duke, might raise me to the summit of notoriety!—Or if I could stoop to club profits

with some mere compounder of drugs, who would play *Puff* for me, magnify my skill, and multiply my cures; while I, in return, *insist upon his sole capability* of preparing my prescriptions, *his drugs being to be had nowhere else*. Such a confederacy would be another road to wealth and fame!—I might thus arrive at a baronetcy, and might make the fortune of my puff apothecary!

But, oh, how many are there with rich and powerful relations and connections; with plodding habits, and with blunted feelings, none of which requisites have I, who are already using the same means for the same ends. No, Lancaster, no;—Fate has not enrolled thee among courtiers, in the form of a fashionable M. D.

What then is to be my destiny?—What future scenes await me?—Silly, weak enquiry! To explore the future is as vain as to lament the past.—Man is master only of the single moment—"NOW."—Oh!

what a spur to action should that thought be!

SCENE II.

The door opened—Lancaster arose from the sofa on which he was reclining—his pulse beat quick, and his pale cheeks for a moment were tinged with red, at the entrance of his benefactor, with Mr. White on his right hand, and Emma Clarendon on his left.

Lyttleton. If, generally speaking, it be not good for man to be alone, much less is it so for the young and invalid; I therefore bring you company. Mr. White, I beg leave to introduce to your better acquaintance, as a friend of mine, from whose goodness, wisdom, and experience, you cannot fail to derive much improvement. This young lady, I believe, requires no introduction from me; but I must acquit myself of an incumbent duty, by informing you, that if, as I have every

reason to believe, the skill of Dr. Ogle has preserved your life, to the zealous kindness of this young lady do you owe it.

Emma. Oh, no—no—no;—not to me, not to my kindness.

Lyttleton. I beg pardon; to the *humanity*, then, of this young lady you are indebted for the benefit of his attendance.

Lancaster. Though to be the object of Miss Clarendon's kindness would certainly be highly flattering to one, who can boast no pretensions to such distinction; yet, poor, humble, and unfortunate, as I am, I trust I shall ever feel grateful both to her, and to you, Sir, for attentions which, I am deeply sensible, can have no other motive than humanity.

Lyttleton. Very prettily expressed, and perhaps very true. What pretensions deserving a young lady's kindness you possess, or may acquire, I must leave young ladies to decide; but for myself, I may be allowed to say, I have only done that which I could not help doing.

White. I believe it, I believe it;—benevolence is instinct with Mr. Lyttleton, Sir. There now—see he frowns at me.—Well, well, Mr. Lancaster, when we are by ourselves, you will, I am sure, indulge an old man's garrulity; for this tongue longs to describe, and to praise, as it merits, philanthropy so rare, so wonderful!

Lancaster. I know—I am aware, Sir. Mr. Crisp has not been niggard in his details of all the extraordinary circumstances that occurred in that place, from which this gentleman——

Lyttleton Nay, my good friend, say at once this conjuror; for, positively, according to this worthy man's account, the performance of a disinterested act of humanity, in this country, would seem to entitle one to that appellation, as much as the tricks of an Indian juggler. But he is wrong: accident has given an air of ostentatious display to what has been done in this instance, because the circumstances of

the meeting of Mr. White and Miss Clarendon, are such as do not every day occur; but I am myself well acquainted with many most striking instances of British benevolence and philanthropy, which, if published, would make as marvellous a chapter of romance, as the incidents, strange as they are, which have brought us four together in this pleasant little parlour; where we will now sit down, and talk over our future plans.

White. That's his way, Mr. Lancaster, whenever our lips are pregnant with his own just praise, (how he contrives to see it, I know not, but he does) instantly he starts another subject. But we shall have opportunities, I trust, in spite of——

Lyttleton. I see the garrulous fit is on you, Friend White;— I wish you to indulge it; but, if it will not give you pain, it shall be upon a different topic. Our young invalid here has already received, from my pen, a concise account of your

history, as far as you related it to me. Have you any objection to our allotting this opportunity of becoming further acquainted with the unhappy events which conducted you to that abode, where, in seeking Lancaster, I was so fortunate as to discover you;--and where both were so happy as to meet this lovely unsophisticated child of nature;—who, whether she be descended from you or not, cannot but be dear to you, from the powerfully-interesting recollections she has renewed in your mind, and the tender feelings she has rekindled in your heart. And if this fair and good gift of Providence be, with so much justice, highly-prized by you and me, my venerable friend, let us not forget, that Emma's steps would not have been directed to the gates of which you kept the keys, had not *another here* first passed them. So that you perceive in him, a claimant on our gratitude, at least; and in thus admitting him a party to these con-

fidential interviews, we prove our willingness to repay our debt, and, at the same time, bind him over to our future service.

Lancaster. I deeply feel the honour of this confidence; but there is, Sir, in the extraordinary incidents, which have brought about the present interview, much that I am anxious to explain. Though I can bear, (and that is not a pleasurable task) though I can bear to stand before you as the object of your pecuniary bounty, I cannot continue to receive charitable esteem. I deeply feel, Sir, that not only am I without pretensions to any portion of your good opinion, but that appearances, and situation, and report, are all calculated to render me an object of blame, if not of contempt;—and this I cannot bear.

Lyttleton. My testy Sir! pray curb this irritable and rebelling spirit, which ill agrees with convalescence of a sickly

frame!—Pray what are the appearances, or situation, or report, from which you fear contempt? If you are angry that the fates have not placed you and me in a reversed position, I will not try to soothe such ungrateful ire;—neither will I investigate what source, save pride or selfishness, gives rise to such a feeling! The appearances to which you allude, and the place in which I first beheld you, abstractedly considered, afford no criterion of character; and as to report, you wrong me, if you imagine I form my estimate of my acquaintance by the scale of gossip rumour.

Lancaster. Pardon me, Sir; I am in error. I have dreaded a vulgar tone of thought and feeling in one, whose conduct, so opposite to the common-place modes of the world, ought to have inspired me with juster notions of his superior mind.—Yet, even barring all the prejudices that little-minded individuals would have imbibed and cherished against me, owing to my

situation as a parish pauper, still there will remain much to apologize for in the transactions which placed me there.

Lyttleton. For these apologies we have no leisure now; nor, in my mind, can even a moment be well bestowed on them at any time. The confession of error is useful, because, in minds not incorrigibly bad, it is a pledge of its relinquishment; but the task of extenuation, is merely an effort to make men view our actions through optics of our own formation, instead of trusting to their own means of vision; and surely the good opinion of those who do not judge for themselves, is little worth possessing. But we will change this topic. In the free and confidential intercourse, which it is my desire shall subsist between all of us now present, we shall have enough of opportunities for discussion, as well as narration. At present, I am anxious for the conclusion of Mr. White's story, in which this

young lady, I cannot help believing, has a natural interest. Come, sit you down, my Emma; and while yon crowd of triflers are parading up and down the Steine there, echoing short nonsense sentences from group to group, let us listen to the lips of age, and learn a lesson from the annals of adversity.

White. I obey your wishes, my worthy benefactor; and having, since the last time I talked upon the subject of my unhappy daughter, meditated much and usefully on the painful theme, I hope I shall be able, with more tranquillity than I could then command, to dwell upon those scenes which memory still presents in vivid colours. If, however, the remembrance of a villain, of a monster, should excite an ire, that is almost impious to the great Creator, scruple not to rebuke me. I will contend with it. Yet when the image of an Effington comes to blast the otherwise so fair creation of this earth—oh! how hard it is to recon-

cils——But forgive me;—I will be more collected.

When last we discoursed upon this subject, I was speaking to you of that happy period when my daughter, Harriet, grown up to woman's state, renewed within my widowed breast an active interest in the scenes of life. I will not be guilty of injustice to her memory, by attempting to describe her mind or person; to me, she seemed perfection;—and that perfection was rendered doubly-precious by its resemblance to her beloved mother!—She was a lovely and accomplished girl, in the prime of youth and full of beauty; she was also the sole heiress to all the wealth her doating father had accumulated, amounting to a sum which, at that time, was called a dower worthy of a Prince. There were, indeed, no Princes then, who sued a commoner's much-envied wealth, in barter

for connection with a crown; but there were not wanting in my Harriet's train the sons of peers, who found their way even to our humble circle, and with a crowd of other wooers, "felt or feigned a flame." Among these suitors there was one named Effington. His manners were specious, his reputation untainted; and the circumspection of his conduct in our company so masterly, that he appeared, to the deceived observations of my poor Harriet and me, a man influenced by the finest sense of honour, and the most amiable impulses of human nature. His fortune was large; and he was known to possess peculiar means of increasing it, by a knowledge of money transactions, then very rare. This Effington proffered her his heart and hand, and in an evil hour, (oh, fatal, fatal, hour!) my Harriet, the sole charm of my life, the joy and hope of my old age, was surrendered to

the artifices of this Effington, and became his bride.

A very few days elapsed ere the varnish of hypocrisy began to lose its effects, and features of deformity became visible, where only perfections had before appeared. In a week,—yes, Sir, in a single week,—the mask was altogether useless; and he, who had seemed all virtue, exhibited, without the slightest effort to conceal them, proofs of the basest motives, and the meanest depravities of the human heart. Oh, what a sickness of the soul was mine, when first the monster burst upon my vision, in all his undisguised deformity, and my shuddering recollection told me that my child, my darling Harriet, was his—irrevocably his—for ever! Fathers! fathers! beware to whom you yield your precious trust:—it is not enough that ye do *not sell your offspring;* take heed, take heed, that they *are not stolen!*

Lancaster. Could there exist a being

such as you describe, Sir—and did he not bear upon his front some caution of deformity, to warn the unhappy victim of his accursed artifice?

White. You wound me unintentionally: I should have seen—a father's eye, a father's caution, should have saved his child;—but, no; my unsuspecting heart never once prompted the idea of THE MAN OF AVARICE. He was no libertine—no drunkard—no spendthrift—no gamester; any one of these had he been, he would have had a brand of caution on his character, and I should have spurned his overtures; but, masked as the villain was, I led him to my child—I seconded his views upon her affection; and she, in duty, not from love, received his proffered hand.

Lyttleton. What was the nature of the discovery you made?

White. A discovery that appalled me.—In the short suit (too short, alas! I own) that he had paid my daughter, so well the

villain feigned, I fancied that his passion was one of more than common ardour; her presence brought smiles in his countenance—her attentions seemed absolutely to delight him: his eyes watched every movement of her lips, and the mere mention of her name gave birth to ardent sighs!—Sir, all this was artifice—he never felt the master passion of the human soul, he never knew the blissful joys of love.—An outward semblance of the human form, he was without a human heart. His hollow breast was a chill cavern, in which no passion grew, save only AVARICE; baneful to all existence but its own—mingled with which, nor joy, nor love, nor mercy to mankind, nor hope in heaven, can live! Such was the husband—no, let me not abuse the holy title—such was the master—of the poor slave, my child!—Forgive these tears.—

Lyttleton. There are few such charac-characters as that which we are speaking

of;—I once encountered such a man—but proceed, Sir.

White. A very few days after the wedding, with tearful eyes my Harriet related a conversation, in which Effington had expressed his design of going to reside at Calcutta! I flew to Effington, and demanded explanation. The villain knew I altogether lived on the smiles and endearments of my child. He had been offered, he said, the means of amassing an immense fortune in India, and bluntly told me, that he could not *afford* to let such an opportunity escape. I quickly discerned the monster's motive was to extort from me, by this and other cruel artifices, the last shilling of my property: for I had settled almost all my real estate on Harriet, as a marriage portion. In despair, with a frantic blindness, I became his victim. At immense loss I closed, with wasteful speed, the whole of my commercial concerns, converted all species of my pos-

sessions into money, and upon my knees implored the barbarian to accept the whole, as the price of the only earthly happiness I sought, that of passing my days under the same roof with my poor Harriet.

The boon was yielded, and the voyage to India, which had never been intended, but as a rod of terror to a doating father, was pretended to be abandoned.

One home again was mine and my Harriet's; but oh, how different from the fire-side that she had used to make so serenely joyous.

Instead of the cherub, who with smiles of gratitude and joy carolled away the winter's evening, or tuned the harp, or with a virtuous energy recited the moral tale, or traced with fairy fingers on the virgin satin the garden's blooming beauties, to please a parent's eye;—instead of the quick step of joy to ask the permission she knew was ne'er denied, to join in the enlivening dance, or to attend of the pleasures of the

drama, what was now the scene!——When Effington was present, that husband whose society ought to have elicited smiles of joy, and beams of confidence, my Harriet's lips were closed by fear, and her eyes shrunk from the encounter of a tyrant's vigilance. When we were alone, it was a painful struggle on both our parts to deceive each other by our looks, and our half-uttered sentences, into a forgetfulness of our real feelings.—I read the sad volume of her woes in spite of every tender effort to keep it from my knowledge. Her faded cheeks, her hollow, languid eye, and wasted form, far more expressively told the tale than all that eloquence could speak. Yet, with such a conviction on my heart, I often tried to smile.

Thus passed the honey-moon!—Month succeeded month in the same monotony of grief for the space of a year, when, somewhat suddenly, Mr. Effington made a change in his domestic arrangements,

which excited my surprise, and afterwards my suspicion.

Avarice being his god, he had fixed his establishment upon a scale of absolute parsimony. His table was a miser's board, and his companions consisted of a few Jew money brokers, and two or three lawyers, more celebrated for their cunning than their integrity. Of course, I knew it was for some stratagem, that he changed his plan so far, as to furnish additional rooms in his house, that he set up a new carriage, sported gaudy liveries, and announced his intention of giving dinners, seeing company, and introducing his wife into the fashionable world. Aware that there was a game to be played on this new field, I watched the hypocrite most narrowly, and particularly investigated the characters whom he introduced to his table, which I was conscious would be spread with luxuries only for a lure. These persons consisted chiefly of certain common-place sort of

people of each sex, in the higher ranks of life; who are always to be commanded by a short invitation to good dinners, and the chances of the card-table. These mere *figuranti* were, however, necessary, in order that the principal performers might not be so abruptly brought forward, as to display at once the story of the ballet.

Besides such characters as these, Mr. Effington had always very much about him a man named Eaton. He called him his friend Eaton, but I will not be guilty of impiety against the rare and sacred quality of friendship, and, therefore, will not designate this dirty agent by the name of friend. It was the province of this Eaton to act as a sort of Jackall to this Hyæna's appetite for gold. Himself a gamester, without the incumbrance of a guinea, or a character—he, nevertheless, associated with many who had wealth in perspective, and reputation at nurse; and whose salvation depended upon the preser-

vation of the latter, at whatever expence to the former! Usury was to the soul of Effington the very revelling of enjoyment; and so many pigeoned youths of fortune had Eaton placed within his grasp, that if he had been susceptible of gratitude, he must have felt it towards this agent; but, no:—it was not for the food he had already procured for his avarice, that his purse and his table were open to him, but for the hope and expectation of that which it was yet in his power to gather.

I observed, that just previously to, and subsequent upon this new system, there was more than usual earnestness in the conferences of Effington and Eaton: their closettings were more frequent, and their appointments made with more precision. Some plot I foresaw was in agitation, but so carefully was it concealed, that till its developement I had not a suspicion of its object. Almighty heavens! how could I! Were the tale not my own—if my own

heart and memory did not, in agonizing wounds, never to be healed, record the facts, no other human evidence could make me believe that a being, bearing the form and features of man, could, for the sake of gold, steal from a fond father's arms his only child, give her the name of wife, and then again for gold, deliberately plan her prostitution, and his own disgrace!'

After a few days previous announcement, there was introduced, as recently arrived from France, a Countess D'Entreville. This foreigner became a constant visitor—almost an inmate of the family; and she acquired, in a short space of time, such an ascendancy over the mind of my dear Harriet, that a fond father's heart grew early jealous of fascinations which operated so powerfully on the affections and confidence of his darling child;—though he then little dreamed to what a

dire crisis that power would impel its victim.

You, Sir, who have mingled so largely with the world, may possibly have seen an approximation to D'Entreville, in some of those highly gifted and accomplished courtezans of the Continent, whose talents were in so much request among diplomatists of the old school: brilliant wit—a sportive, yet elegant fancy—a vivacity exhilarating, yet never overpowering—a prurient licentiousness of sentiment, conveyed in language the most delicate—a form finely moulded in beautiful proportions—a face—oh, never will it be absent from my mind's view! In no other have I ever beheld eyes such as D'Entreville's; they were diamonds, endowed with all the eloquence of speech—of more than speech; their power was rather that of music's magic charm—at will they elevated, or depressed the soul, whose "every passion they could raise or quell." Scorn never was conveyed

so forcefully by language, as by the mute eloquence of those eyes, in unison with the expression of her curled lips; nor ever did the voice of joy, with human utterance, so delight the heart, as when they played in concord with her dimpled smiles. Oh, that a surface such as this should be the rind of such a loathsome core!—But I forget myself;—the theme is so prolific of strong recollections, that I shall grow tedious. I will, then, only say, that the Countess D'Entreville was one of the worst, if not the very worst, of those deceivers of mankind, who bear a demon's spirit in an angel's form. Oft, I remember, when I was a boy, have I arraigned the genius which could imagine a character so unnaturally disgusting as Macbeth's most sanguinary wife; but I have lived to know, that murder is no bar to ambition's course in man or woman; and she had ambition in her breast to tempt her to her

bloody purposes. Milwood, again, I used to think the overstrained conceit of Lillo's sickly fancy: alas! too many real Milwood's prove the portrait true. Yet, in such instances, there is the strong exciting passion of revenge, hidden from the world indeed, and not unfrequently so latent, even in the miserable bosoms which it agitates, that they cannot themselves account why ruin to mankind yields them delight. But, Sir, in D'Entreville, I lose all clue of passion; in her, I can trace no motive stronger than the love of gain, for the perpetration of deeds as infamous in purpose as Milwood's or Macbeth's. I know that there are nations, where the hireling bravo subsists by the foulest deeds of murder. Yet I hold even the assassin avocation honourable, when compared with that vile work in which the talents and the charms of D'Entreville were exercised.

Lyttleton. Did Effington——But I will not interrupt your narrative by questions.

White. I said this Countess became almost an inmate at Effington's house. She was introduced to our circle nearly about the same time with Sir Edward Newington, a young baronet, just then come of age, and into possession of one of the largest fortunes in the kingdom. Until the very day he was twenty-one years old. Newington was under the guardianship of a narrow-minded mother, having lost his father when a mere infant. A defective education, weak intellects, a juvenile unbounded confidence in Eaton, who had raised him large sums of money whilst a minor; a handsome person, an eager vanity to acquire fashionable notoriety, by any eccentric display of his newly-acquired power and wealth, were the apposite qualifications, which rendered this young man the very desired object for the purposes of Effington.

The task which Eaton undertook was to entangle this weak youth in an intrigue with the wife of his friend, by pointing out to him the glory of the conquest, which her great [illegible], the total indifference of her husband, and her own unguardedness, arising from the absence of all suspicion of evil, appeared to render sure and easy. The talents of D'E[illegible]treville were to be exerted, in vile combination, upon the intended female victim; and the powers she displayed defy all description.

The young heart, the young female heart especially, will not long remain without a votary. My Harriet's heart had worshipped no other earthly image, but that which filial duty and affection had raised for her adoration in her father's form. For her husband, she endeavoured to cherish the reverence and respect which a sense of duty created; but that was a reverence, with which no warmth of feeling

mingled—it was a species of cold homage, paid by ordinance; and which she might have tendered to an effigy of marble, had she so been taught, with no less apathy.

[As he concluded the last sentence, Mr. White drew a small packet of letters from his bosom, tied round with an almost worn-out piece of black ribband.]

Having thus introduced you, continued the old gentleman, to a sufficient acquaintance with the writers of these letters, and the characters named in their contents, it will be less painful to me, and may vary the monotony of my narrative, if Mr. Lancaster would read from them the passages I have marked in red ink, as they carry on the thread of my poor Harriet's history in the very words of the personages themselves.

This letter is from the Countess D'Entreville, to a confidential female friend, then resident at Bath, and appears to

have been written on her first arrival in London.

Lancaster. (*reading*)—

The Countess D'Entreville to Madame De Courcy.

"*Hanover Square, Thursday.*"

"Here I am, Constantia—Whirled to this gay metropolis in a chaise and four, I stepped from my winged vehicle into a far more splendid mansion than I have inhabited since the death of that poor devil, and rich old rogue, the Duke De Lolme. Nothing more superb have I seen out of Paris. A complete set of servants are hired, and absolutely paid, as I understand; and——but you, who recollect the gaythings of ten years ago, will be able to imagine all I enjoy here, without fatiguing myself with description, when I assure you, that our revels of those days are

brought to my mind by the *appearances* of the present. Eaton was in waiting to receive me, but I have not yet seen his master, Effington.—He is this moment announced.

* * * * * * * *

"An escape—an escape, my dear Constantia! Never could an old proverb—"speak of the ——,"—have been so aptly applied as when I wrote the word *Effington*. 'Tis well—yes, if the work pays me it is well—that I did not see my task master before I had become his hireling. The cold viper—I really dread the effects of the sight of him;—no, not the sight of the creature—for he has really eyes, nose, and month, and hands, and feet, and he speaks—yes, actually speaks—which you know is a discriminating quality between our two-legged species, and what is termed the brute creation. Had it not have been for this faculty, (and even as it is, I verily doubt its infallibility as a test) I should

place this Effington in some hitherto unknown class of animals. But you shall judge for yourself. I was at the upper end of a superb saloon, when Eaton followed into the apartment his employer, Effington. I took your favourite attitude. My perceptions, you well know, are quicker than the lightning: I glanced, but nothing met my glances; I gazed—a countenance, or, if I might coin a word, a *homo-surface*, chilled me for a moment. I rallied instantly—bent upon revenge—and all the artillery of my eyes, fed with all the fires of my soul, were at once discharged; but, with no more effect upon the object of attack, than might have been produced upon the marble pedestal to a bust of Cleopatra, on which my arm reclined. He smiled, indeed—if that motion of the lips, which shewed his upper teeth, merits not rather the appellation of a snarl; and then, with cold familiarity, as if we had been acquaintances for ages, ad-

proached me, and said—'D'Entreville, our undertaking is a most expensive speculation, and, if it fail, will make me curse this hour; but Eaton is your guarantee, as well as your confidante. Speed—good speed, I mean—shall be made well worth your efforts, Madam, I assure you; for this mansion, which is so admirably adapted for our purpose, must be surrendered in less than two months: I only hold it in trust for a minor, and his guardians are determined to bring a chancery suit instantly to issue, which I have protracted as long as prudent. These paintings and sculptures are the property of Cardinal ———; and my friend, Moses Samuels, who has bought them for the Cardinal, charges me an extravagant rate of hire for the use of them; besides, the vermin of servants will rise in their demands, if it should be necessary to keep them over the quarter. Newington, too, will be getting older every day; and, indeed, every hour

he is liable to fall into other hands. You see, then, there is not a moment to be lost: I, therefore prefer business to ceremony, and thus frankly confess my wishes. People say I am fond of money—you may suppose so too;—perhaps I am;—if so, it follows that I know the value of it, and, I am sure, can never lay it out to more advantage, than in the purchase of your speed, on this occasion, in addition to your skill.'

"At that instant, Constantia, when my scorn had almost overpowered my sense of interest, and even the magic of wealth had almost lost its influence upon my soul, I was prevented from that ruin, which the words hovering on my lips would have brought upon our plan, by the announcement of the carriage of Mrs. Effington.—'I must vanish,' cried the votary of avarice; 'Eaton, take your cue!'

"It was a visit of ceremony, forced on

her by her husband. She is unquestionably a beauty; but an air of sorrow pervaded her countenance. My first sensation was a pleasing admiration; it was succeeded by something like a qualm of pity, which, combined with the embers of resentment against her husband, I verily believe would have saved her, at the expence of my reputation for ever as an *intriguante*, but for some circumstances which I shall have occasion to mention hereafter."

* * * * * * *

White. Enough of that letter, Mr. Lancaster: now take this, from the young baronet to a friend at Oxford. The extract marked, you will perceive, is neither elegant, nor sensible; but it is illustrative, and characteristic.

Lancaster. (*reading*)

NO. II.

Sir Edward Newington to Charles Fanshaw, Esq.

"Talk no more, Dear Fanshaw, of

your Marias—your charming Sophias; come to London—come this moment! fly, at all risks, from hum-drum Oxford, and I will introduce you, you dog, to something alive. Oh, Fanshaw! in comparison with D'Entreville, all womankind are dull, inanimate figures—canvas characters—still-life daubs! —Sophia Martin, I own, I have called, and once thought, a beauty; and even so I did Maria Dawson. But then I had not seen the D'Entreville! Oh, Fanshaw, come and see my D'Entreville!—But why should I urge you so much, before I am sure of my own happiness, in possessing the prize? For after your delighted eyes have been set a sparkling, by a glimpse of my D'Entreville, you would as soon make love to the waxwork figures at Westminster Abbey, as to Maria or even Sophia. But I think I am a fool to invite you, for I am not yet sure of my own felicity, as I said before; though, thanks to a tolerable share of that per-

sonableness that pleases the fair sex, more thanks, perhaps, to that article which my good mamma nursed so well for me for nineteen years—you guess what I mean—the *magical penny*, you know—the silver key, as they call it—I think altogether, through figure and fortune, I stand a good chance.

"Though I may whisper to you—but let it be mum, Fanshaw—D'Entreville does not shew much *gumshun* for her own interest, in every now and then puffing me off in a fine style to Effington's wife, who is horribly neglected by him. Eaton says, he is sure that she is quite struck with your humble servant. If I thought so, of course I should not suffer the little angel '*to sigh and lament her in vain*,' for she is certainly pretty, and young, and *all that*.—But as for beauty—D'Entreville, at forty, has a million charms, which one looks for in vain in a mere pretty face at twenty.' Besides, Effington is so con-

founded!y fond of money, that the loss of a wing, or a s. rgeon's bill would be but a small part of the damages, should one fall into his clutches. No, no, my lad! if ever I am dipped to the tune of "ten thousand," it shall be for something that will cut a better dash in history, than the most glorious uproar that can arise from any affair with Effington's wife.

"But Eaton is out in his conjectures. I suspect her pretty eyes; she certainly has pretty eyes, but I suspect they wander another way. Do you know Gordon—Colonel Gordon—the Monmouthshire Gordon?—How the devil should you, though, now I recollect: poor Fanshaw! cooped up in those chicken houses, called colleges, what can the most spirited of us know of the world? I dare say you never heard his name; but he's devilish well known among us in town—a fine fellow—a good three-bottle man—an excellent swordsman—and one of the luckiest fellows at a

throw, that ever rattled a box.—But where the devil have I got to?—describing Colonel Gordon, when I was about to give you a description of my D'Entreville?—But that's impossible, so for that reason I won't attempt it: only take this—that she's the most charming, most fascinating, most bewitching creature, that ever played the devil with the heart of a man. You might go into her company from a funeral, and if she pleased she'll set you a dancing with joy; or if from the middle of a jig she takes you in a corner, and chuses to make a fool of you, she has the art of lengthening your face in a moment, and making you look so sad, and sigh so loud, that the whole company point at poor Romeo.

"With all this knowledge of her power, Fanshaw, I feel no inclination to keep out of her way; in fact, I spend all my time in her company, though there is no meeting her out of the set that Effing-

ton has about him. We are always together, either in Hanover Square, at D'Entreville's, or at Effington's; and such famous parties they are——you, in your coop, can have no sort of idea of them. D'Entreville sings, and plays, and talks in such a style, that within these few days even little Melpomene Effington seems inclined to enjoy a little comedy hilarity, when we can get the old fellow her father out of the way. Gordon and I, and a few of us with D'Entreville, have laughed her out of her filial duty a little already; and she begins now to be one of us. I wonder Effington gives such famous suppers—it must cost him a pang to part with his money; but I suppose he has his view on some of the *Johnny Raws* that he lends his money to.—Its well for me I am provided for. By the bye, Charles, make yourself quite easy about the old *fogrum* that holds your bond for the two thousand pounds, for he has sold it to

Effington a bargain, and I shall let Eaton settle it with him. He says that Effington has agreed never to ask you for the principal, but only you are to sign something to pay him an annuity as long as you and I live; that is, we are both of us to sign it.—I don't understand it much; but I leave it to Eaton, who is very clever at these matters, and Effington pays him, it seems, for his trouble in getting these sort of annuitants."

White. More than enough of that. I will thank you, Sir, next to read this long extract from a letter of Gordon—the libertine Gordon—though he, villain as he is, compared with Effington, is—— but read, read, Sir!

Lancaster. (*reading*)

NO. III.

Col. Gordon to the Countess D'Entreville.

"Ten thousand thanks—thanks?—the word's too cold; nor does our northern

language yield a phrase rich enough to convey to you, dear D'Entreville, the feelings of gratitude I owe you for the blissful communication of last night. Fool, idiot, buzzard, that I have been—but you have given me a new creation—the spring of life returns—I once more breathe the elysium air of love a[illegible]! What do I not owe to you—m[illegible] life I owe to you—for you have bestowed upon me that wondrous charm, which constitutes the sole and perfect bliss of our existence; that gem, which makes rich the poorest of the poor, and, wanting which, monarchs themselves are poor. Yes, D'Entreville, you have inspired me with the conviction, the certainty, that I am beloved by a beloved object! And shall a thought of such a one as Effington stand between me and beauty, that tells me, by looks more true than ever words were, that my adoration is not

spurned!—Oh, D'Entreville, and have you seen this flattering preference so long?—Have you indeed a thousand times watched those charming, those intoxicating beams from the most tender, yet most brilliant eyes of her, whom it were profane to call by any other name than Beauty!

"Was it [illegible], or in spleen, that you refrained one moment from imparting to an adoring, yet trembling votary, the thrilling, the ecstatic joy, that he might hope?—Well, I will pardon all the cruel coldness of your past forbearance, in gratitude for the delights you have at length imparted.

"But D'Entreville—dear D'Entreville—what can you mean by my keeping silence for three days?—Why must I submit to such a torturing state of purgatory?—Silence for three days!—When you exacted such a severe and almost impracticable exercise of faith, why not, at

least, have aided my devotion to your commands, by assigning some strong and insurmountable obstacle to the instant declaration which my heart pants, at all hazards, to pour forth at the feet of my divinity!

"Silence for three days!—*You*, D'Entreville—*you*, mistress as you are of all the movements of the human heart—you, who can so well imagine what effect the joyous light you have afforded me has spread through every vein of an adoring lover, *you* to preach patience and circumspection, after such a full disclosure of the bliss in store for me! Cruel, cruel D'Entreville, why draw aside the veil of doubt —oh, why display fruition to my ravished senses—if it be really necessary still to trust to all the dreaded hazards of a three days silence? To view her—to be in her presence—to hear her voice—to catch the very sighs, warm from her bosom, that mansion of bliss, which I know to be mine—D'Entreville, what anchorite could

obey an injunction so cruel?—No, if it must be—if, indeed, you can assign some irremoveable cause of silence for three days, then let me fly to some solitary spot, where I may pass the seeming ages unobserved by human eyes. So absorbed will be my whole soul in the anticipation of destined joys, so the agonizing apprehension of possible frustration, that, having neither ears nor eyes for other objects, my conduct must exhibit to every looker-on the vagaries of a maniac's wandering mind!

* * * * * *

"You perceive I have been interrupted—Guess by whom?—The icicle of avarice itself. Take, fresh from memory, the whole scene.

(Gordon writing.—To him enter Effington.)

Effington. You are engaged, Colonel Gordon. If I have obtruded unseasonably, I will defer to another opportunity enter-

ing upon the purpose of my visit, as I wish to speak to you on a subject of the deepest importance.

Gordon. I am at your service, Mr. Effington.—Take a chair, Sir.

Effington. Pray, Colonel Gordon—pray may I ask you—you will think it a very singular question—but may I ask you, if you have lately, I mean, if at any time, you have observed any thing remarkable—that is, if ever you have noticed——it is a very delicate subject—I feel it deeply—I hardly know how to enter upon it—yet it is absolutely necessary to my peace of mind—to my character—to my friends—indeed to her friends—I mean Mrs. Effington's friends—my wife's——Colonel, do you understand me?

Gordon. (*confused.*) Sir—understand you ——No—yes—I believe—I really am at a loss——

Effington. I can readily imagine the confusion, Colonel Gordon, which an en-

quiry so unexpected as this must occasion.

Gordon. Quite unexpected, Sir, really—I was going to say—that is—quite unexpected I assure you.

Effington. It affects you, I perceive it does; what, then, must I feel, Colonel—what ought I to feel on such an occasion?

Gordon. Ex[illegible] yourself, Sir.

Effington. Well, then, to the point.—Our acquaintance, Colonel Gordon, has been of some years standing. I have ever conceived you to be an ornament to the profession you belong to. The *moral character* of one's acquaintance, (if the regulations of decorum are not outraged) it is not the custom of our times too scrupulously to investigate; and least of all do we expect to meet the austerity of a monk, or the piety of a saint, in a soldier.

Gordon. Proceed, Sir.

Effington. I premise thus much, that in what I have further to say to you, I may

not be deemed one of those fastidious fools, who expect a set of acquaintances to be carved out of the rest of mankind, according to their own peculiar rules of thoughts and action. I am willing to take the world as it is; and good naturedly to wink at foibles in others, as I am desirous of having my own weaknesses spared by them. But when among the number of those who eat at our board, and partake of our cup, Colonel Gordon, we see some, who would not scruple, at the same moment that they are enjoying our hospitality, to steal from us the most precious jewel in our possession, and plunge into our bosoms the most deadly arrow which the quiver of fate contains, is it not enough to rouse resentment, and excite suspicion?

Gordon. Resentment—suspicion! Your looks are not in unison, Sir, with your language. Resentment of what? I see no anger in your eye. Suspicion of whom?

Your glance is downwards. Be more explicit, Sir, or permit me to change the subject.

Effington. Colonel Gordon — Colonel Gordon—up to this period I have numbered you among my chosen friends. I flattered myself, that if there was a man who would rather die than betray a trust, infringe the laws of hospitality, or be guilty of a breach of friendship, you was that man.

Gordon. Have you altered that opinion?

[Conceive, D'Entreville, the trepidation with which I awaited his reply.]

Effington. If I had, my dear Colonel, do you think I should have sought this interview to confide to you my fears on the tenderest of subjects, and consult you upon the mode of conduct I should adopt under the most heart-rending apprehensions of the—the—yes, I must utter it—

the infidelity of Mrs. Effing——of my wife?

Gordon. Astonishing! Impossible!

Effington. You are not then conscious, Gordon; of any cause for my suspicion?

Gordon. I—I—Mr. Effington!

[Imagine my situation—the very letter I was writing to you, dear D'Entreville, open on the table!]

Effington. Is there, indeed, no one whom you know, that, under all the circumstances with which you are acquainted, if you were compelled to speak the truth, you would name on *this* occasion?

Gordon. Certainly not.

Effington. Well, then, I must be plain, painful as it is.—Know, then, that, though it has escaped your observation, Colonel, I have reasons—unequivocal reasons—for believing that the affections of Mrs. Effington are for ever alienated from me, and that she ardently loves——

Gordon. Whom?

Effington. Sir Edward Newington.

* * * * * *

"If language could express the relief I felt as this name escaped from his lips, I would attempt the task; but it is impossible to describe my feelings.

"The fears I entertained, lest the true state of my dear charmer's heart had been discovered by this hyæna of money, being all at once dispelled, I turned with disgust to the wretch, whose purpose in this visit now broke upon me with hideous light. Your communication, dear D'Entreville, fully elucidated the whole; and, in the sequel, this monster confirmed all your information relative to his otherwise incredible experiments upon the fortune of Sir Edward!

"This interview would have inspired me, even from a mere spirit of chivalry, to have rescued from such fangs the beauteous object of my idolatry, did not a more potent, in plain truth, a resistless

impulse urge me to her deliverance, in the most ardent passion that ever fired the breast of man."

Here Mr. Lancaster paused.—"The infamous plot thickens, you perceive," exclaimed Mr. White, to his auditors; "but I will repress all comment: and as to you, dear image of the much-injured heroine of this real drama,"— addressing Emma,—"let me still deprecate your hatred of my poor child. She fell—she fell;—but, oh! let mercy, when her tale is told, temper the stern decree of justice on her memory! One more letter it will be necessary to peruse, bearing in mind who is the writer; and never forgetting, for a moment, from *whose* pen flow the sentiments that we listen to. The interest you are all pleased to take in this story, is indeed my only apology for introducing you to such writings at all; but

purity of mind has nothing to dread from a mere knowledge of vice, if exhibited without gloss; for since it is decreed that evil must be abroad in the world, the accidental encounters of life throw all species of characters open to our view, and, therefore, ignorance of crime is by no means an indispensable test of innocence.

"In this letter, D'Entreville details, at intervals, the further successes of her artifices. It is written to her *cônfidante*, Madame De Courey. This person was *under the protection*, as the phrase is, of an eccentric man of fortune, who, among other oddities, frequently retired, for months together, from the knowledge of his family and friends, with this De Courcy; receiving no letters, nor suffering any communication to be made to himself, or her, through any channels.

"This circumstance accounts for the various dates, and considerable intervals of

time, at which the contents of this letter were written. Now, then, Mr. Lancaster if you please——

Lyttleton. So much reading aloud is too rude an exercise for our invalid; I will take my turn with much pleasure.

White. You are all goodness and condescension. Please to remember, then, that the passages scored underneath with a red ink pen, are those you are to favour us with.

NO. IV.

The Countess D'Entreville to Madame De Courcy.

"De Courcy, it is almost dawn, and yet I cannot turn my eyes towards my couch. I have passed one of the most brilliant evenings imaginable: the Opera succeeded by a supper and music at the celebrated rich Jew merchant's, I mentioned in my last. Oh, gold—gold!—

Silent, secret conqueror of the world!—Magic genius of the human soul—the human destiny!

"You well know the irresistible success of this universal general, De Courcy—this *real captain of the age.*—Who does not know it?—The power of gold is not now a *whispered* science in the schoolman's closet; it is not a *hieroglyphic* talisman in statesmen's cabinets; no, nor a *veiled* deity, even in the very sanctuary of our high-priests themselves! Wide as the world, and open as the day, the power of gold is spread, and seen, and felt; all human institutions, states, and empires, bear evidence to its omnipotence—and every mortal worships it!

Whence this bombastic flight? methinks I hear you cry.—Well, let it pass—I will not blot it out. *Impromptu*—it positively rolled upon the paper, an involuntary effusion, occasioned by the state

of my mind, which is in a species of delirium between the gay and the sombre.

"This Jew—this rich Jew, whose humble origin I so well know, Constantia, has given an entertainment to five hundred friends to-night, in such a style of splendour as the Prince Nourjahad, in all the revels of imagination, never saw!—But why name its splendour?—The impression on my mind would have been evanescent, had it been created merely by the glitter of the scene, though brilliant and dazzling beyond all precedent. But—oh, the *dramatis personæ!*—to see at the same board—yes, at the same board, Constantia—that board, too, furnished by a Jew—one of the outcast tribe—one of the proscribed race,—to see assembled there, in homage to this Jew, personages of the very highest rank, characters distinguished by pre-eminence in every walk of life: the wit, the beau, the general, the bishop, ministers of state, and patriots by profes-

sion;—in short, a congregation of all the power, rank, wealth, and talents, in the metropolis. This, this it is that has filled my mind with everlasting awe and adoration of that all-conquering power, which this Jew now seems to wield at will! How, or where he found the magic key to treasures inexhaustible, I know not; that he possesses it, is enough for me; and for my purposes, which, as far as prudence will permit me to confide to paper, you shall hereafter know.

"One, who is somewhat in the secret of these things—Effington, I mean—whispered me, that for the *eclat* of this one evening's princely entertainment, the Jew will pay many a thousand pounds! I see you start and stare—and stare and start—and start and stare again!

"Now, puzzle not your rustic noddle with a calculation of the items; allowing *so much* for the most splendid decorations and illuminations—and *so much* for the

rarest dainties and most costly viands—and *so much* for the most precious talents, vocal and instrumental, of all the celebrated performers of the age, exotic and indigenous. Useless labour!—for, though I grant that all those articles in the catalogue of requisites for such a show may be appraised, and a sum total found according to the laws of *Cocker*; what authority will you consult, or how will you discover, the price of ten minutes' gracious shaking hands with princes? Can you tell how much a bishop would demand for the trouble of jolting over the stones from St. James's to the neighbourhood of Duke's Place; and suffering his Christian daughters to admire (*not envy*) in public the *brilliant* graces of the daughters of Israel? How will you estimate the remuneration that shall satisfy a *champagne-loving* Wit for a whole evening of sobriety, spent in attic compliments to host and hostess? What is the amount of the bribe, that could

overcome the spirit of patriotism itself, and make the orators of opposition speak praises in the train of the indispensable friend of all ministries? Or what, above all, is the value itself of those indispensable services, thus publicly avowed by the homage of ministers themselves?

"Lud! lud!—what a strain of *serioso pomposo* am I falling into! Let's 'change the muse and change the measure!' Come, Momus, come with something of the ludicrous!—Eh, presto—done! Sir Edward Newington, and Moses Lyons, come into court!—Now, listen, Constantia, to a *new trick in diamonds*:—Newington's passport carried us all to the Jew's grand gala! I wore the poor dupe's miniature pendant on my breast—his pretty face all of a blaze with diamonds: I assure you well worth five hundred guineas, but out of all size for their purpose, and set with no more taste than is displayed in the hearts, and the true lovers' knots, stuck

on his grandmother's stomacher. Among other distinguished characters, I was soon pointed out as the celebrated flame of the young, rich Newington; and was not a little pestered, during the evening, with the attentions of various high and mighty personages. But the most *valuable* of them all to *me*, was an old acquaintance of our's, Constantia—cunning little Moses, the diamond merchant.—Take the dialogue.

Lyons. Blesh my shoul, my dear hart, how you vas do for so long vile, my love! How younger you vas grow, my dear;—vat great long vile since I vas do bishiness vith you, my hart!

D'Entreville. Hush, Lyons; recollect! In company like this to talk of business!

Lyons. My shoul, vy not?—All this here show is all for bishiness;—vat else brings all these lords, and dukes, and peers, and popes, and princes, and such folks, here to this house, but bishiness?

My clever hart, *you* don't think they come here to see these twinkle, twinkle, leetel lamps—nor to hear *squeeke, squeeke*—*squauke, squauke*—and *thrumbo grumbo*; nor to eat sweetmeats, nor drink tea; nor to walk *mum chance* round and round, and nod their heads? Vat then for they come? for *bishiness*, to be sure—for make bargains, my love. Courtiers make bargains vith *chetezans*—*monish* for *plashes*; ladies make bargain with shentlemen—diamonds for kisses!—Ah, ah, my hart! you understand, eh?

[You should be informed, Constantia, that this dialogue passed in one corner of a prodigiously crowded concert room. Sir Edward, with Gordon leaning on his arm, which I had just relinquished, had pressed forward several paces, to listen to a scientific, but abominably loud chorus, and the eyes of most present were fixed on the orchestra, while little Lyons fast-

ened his, most wickedly, upon the diamonds that surrounded the adorable phiz of my baronet.]

"Blesh my shoul," continued Lyons, vat a beautiful picture you've got, my love;—so natural as life! How like Sir Edvard! I know Sir Edvard—a good man—very good man Sir Edvard. But vat ugly diamonds, my hart—too big—too big—look like sham. I will shange 'em for you, my hart: *leetel* oons look better, and guineas, in pretty hands, feel so nice—do more good than stones, that only sparkle—sparkle—sparkle!

[Just at this instant the chorus finished; supper was announced, and the most delightful squeeze and crush ensued. Availing himself of the lucky moment, and ere I could repress his assurance, the fellow had dexterously broken the pearl threading by which the miniature was suspended; and poor Newington, with his

diamonds and pearls, became the property of Lyons, by capture, without my having fixed any price as my share of the spoil. My laughter absolutely was hysterical, and was imputed to the squeeze.

"The scramble for places at the supper tables over, I at length found myself seated opposite poor Mrs. Effington, who, in the simplicity of her heart, screamed out—that my miniature was gone!

"You would have applauded my acting to the skies, Constantia. I frightened them all with my own imitation of fright. I employed a hundred knights to go in quest of my lost treasure. Gordon, Effington, Eaton, Newington himself, with a host of volunteers, all sallied forth, peeping under sofas, chairs, and benches, and offering bribes to honesty to restore the lost or stolen property; but as they could not advertise, *that diamonds are of no use*

to any but the right owner, you will readily conjecture the result of their search.

"Poor Newington, with a face as woeful as the Knight of La Mancha, announced the failure; but attempted to console me by saying, that Gray should replace the loss as soon as possible—'Ah, my dear Newington, the diamonds he may replace—their value may be equalled, and perhaps their display may be improved—but, dear, dear, Edward, you never will be able to favour me with such a happy resemblance;—and, even if the artist should twice do justice to those features, fate itself denies me the possibility of receiving a second gift under those peculiarly blissful circumstances, which rendered this first pledge inestimable, and its loss irreparable!'

"I need not put the prompter's mark to that speech, Constantia;—you will congratulate me, I am sure, on this adventure, which unexpectedly places a *dis-*

posable force of five hundred guineas at the command of your D'Entreville."

"My *femme de chambre* taps again: 'Come in, Nannette.'

"'Indeed, indeed, my lady, you will be ill to-morrow—I wish that nasty writing had never been invented.'

"'Well, then, put twenty drops more to my draught, and give it me at once.'

"Constantia, the libation shall be thine. Good night!"

(Written on the same paper.)

"According to the solar and lunar calculations of the cunning men who make almanacks, I perceive that a period of exactly one month, two weeks, three days, and twelve hours have elapsed, since last I held in my fingers the little feathered

implement, by whose necromantic aid are removed kingdoms, and continents, and oceans, that separate friends from friends!

"Come hither, then, Constantia De Courcey, from whatsoever soil, or clime, or region, you inhabit, and listen to your D'Entreville.

"Behold me now in a large, well-furnished library, seated in pompous state, momentarily expecting the arrival of Sir Edward Newington, and his *very clever* agent, to Mr. Eaton. They are to bring with them several skins of parchment, and *quantum sufficit* of sealing wax; which, being operated upon by certain practitioners of the *black art*, vulgarly denominated conveyancers, and touched with the finger and seal of Sir Edward, they, the aforesaid parchments, will be instantly endued with a magic quality, that will make their possessor, your humble servant, mistress of two thousand pounds a year! Have I not managed well, De

Courcy? I am sure your lips spontaneously cry, 'Joy, joy!' And yet—strange creature that I am—these moments, devoted to the anticipation of such an acquisition, hang like ages of horror on my fancy. Vapours, stronger than I ever felt, oppress me—an unconquerable dejection weighs my spirits down—and something, yes I must confess it, in spite of all my pride and all my reason, (I whisper it to you, my friend,) something very like remorse is rankling in my bosom.—Remorse!—Blot out the silly syllables, Constantia—while, by the power of music, I dispel the thoughts that generated such a puerile chimera!"

* * * * * *

"It will not do;—even music fails me. My harp has lost its charm; my fingers, nerveless, tarry on the strings, or else the traitorous instrument conspires with the evil spirit of the hour, and, when my ears await a chord of mirth, vibrations, har-

ried and wild, yet melancholy, tremble on the air; and, coward like, I start, 'e'en at the sound myself have made.' This must not be yielded to!—Come, then, once more, my pen, and I will dare this dæmon of despondency, with a deportment and a front as bold as that, which you and I, Constantia, have so oft applauded in the fictitious libertine, Don Juan; when, resolutely brave, he sits him down to supper with the hideous ghost, that would have terrified, even to annihilation, the conscience-ridden million.

"The cure of superstitious fear is an appeal to reason: the practice even of our nurses and our grandams points out this truth to babes of every growth.—Who does not recollect some instance, during the period of early childhood, when, in the shadows of the twilight, or by the dim glimmering of the nursery lamp, fancy has descried some marvellous and terrific image in the distant corner? A white frock, thrown

across a high chair back, or nurse's long red cloak suspended from a peg;—how often have objects such as these been conjured by imagination into flying angels, and horned Lucifers, of every size and shape! Fortunate is the child, who, at such a moment, is compelled to quit its couch, and, by a tangible encounter with the delusive object of its terrors, is thus early taught to conquer the chimeras of the brain by philosophical experiment.—And shall I, shall Henrietta D'Entreville, after so many tests, so many times repeated, shudder and shrink at vapours still less substantial than a nursery ghost? The question makes you smile, De Courcy; but positively I am grave. And what has thus alarmed a soul like your's? methinks you say.—Smile again if you will, but the truth shall out: I have been terrified into this vapourish state by the wild rhapsodies of an old man gone crazy—White, the father of the Effington; he is my ghost.

The looks, the words, and shrieks of the old bedlamite have—yes, to you alone I own it—*they have terrified me.* "Not that they have inspired me with personal apprehensions; no—for my ever constant friend, the poniard, once Marchotti's, has still a point to it as brilliant as when it sparkled beneath the rays of that Italian sun, which saw me snatch it from the villain's arm, and plunge it in his treacherous breast.—That poniard is still treasured near my heart, ready to defend or to avenge its mistress.

"Why, then, do I tremble? What substantial ills have I to fear? And shall shadows fright me? Shall the intrepid spirit that could nerve this arm to deeds of heroism, deeds of blood—shall such a spirit cower at ideal terrors, the vapourish conjuration of a disordered brain?——Oh, where is shame—where is pride—while even to your eye I submit this weakness!——

* * * * * *

"To return to facts.—The *Effington drama* is over.—Gordon, you will recollect, is a character not introduced in the original sketch of the author; and though many of the scenes were played precisely as he arranged them, yet the *denouement* has so widely differed from the plot which he projected, that Effington himself is, among all the *dramatis personæ*, the most contemptible and most chagrined. The facilities purposely afforded to entrap Sir Edward Newington have been seized by Colonel Gordon, who has absolutely carried off the object intended to be thrown in the way of the baronet; while he has become, in *reality*, what the outwitted Effington conjectured he was only feigning to be, the public admirer, and acknowledged slave, of your D'Entreville.

The object of scorn to all, the avaricious wretch is at the same time the victim of self-accusation. He has drawn

upon himself the eyes of a scoffing world, without even the gratification of a miser's heart to resort to—for, even were the place of their retreat to be discovered, Gordon is as poor as soldiers generally are. Eaton has played his part so well, that he is not suspected by either of his dupes; Effington still confides in him; and his influence over Newington is second only to my own. I am now imperial with the latter. So enamoured is the Baronet, that if I chose to wear a matrimonial chain, I might *fasten this rich novice to my destiny* by the name of husband. But, no; it suits my purpose better to rule without that contract; it is enough for me, that this very hour he signs himself my slave, and irrevocably bestows on me a settlement of two thousand pounds a year. His carriages, his servants, his houses in town and country, are all at my command. Not a want can I imagine, not a wish can I form, in the power of wealth to bestow,

which is ungratified.—Oh, that it could efface the recollection of the part which I have played towards Harriet Effington—and, above all, the image and the imprecations of old White——

* * * * * *

"The pen dropped from my hand, De Courcy. There was a tap at the door, as I wrote the name; it seemed a clap of thunder.

"A servant with a note from Sir Edward: he will be here in an hour.

"As some excuse for these terrors, childish as I know they are, I will attempt to describe a scene that followed soon after the elopement.

"I was sitting alone, when Mr. White was announced. Figure to yourself a grey-headed man;—agony in his looks, tears streaming down his cheeks, his hands clasped fervently together;—behold him falling on his knees, as he uttered, in a tone of voice so heart-

piercing, that its remembrance freezes me, 'Lady, lady, give me my child!—Pray, pray have mercy on an old man's sufferings!—Is she not here? What—not here?—You hide her from me—let me see her—I will not harm her! Oh, take me to her hiding place—her remorse will break her heart! I seek to soothe, not chide, the wretched lost one. Oh, if you will take me to my miserable child, that I may place her aching head upon this breast, that I may press her to my heart, and teach her not to despair of Heaven's forgiveness, I will pray even for *you!*'

"In vain I attempted to address words to a mind disordered;—he held discourse only with his own imagination;—but the following images, which his incoherent utterance placed before me, were at that moment terrible.—Rising from his knees, he continued:—'Pray for *you?*—yes, poor soul! you have most need of prayer. Do

you think I do not know all your stratagems;—what pains you took to make her innocent heart a counterpart of your own? Do you think I do not know, who taught her to blush at being seen in her father's company;—who selected her associates, her books, her amusements? And, oh! vile, vile, vile—you a woman!——No, no, no!—I know you are the wicked serpent of Eden;—none but a fiend, none but a fiend could perpetrate so foul a deed! Go, consult your mirror; look, look stedfastly—there!—Now, hold a chalice in your hand; pour wine into it; more, more yet—still nearer to the brim! Now, see there—a fiend, in a satyr's form, peeps o'er your shoulder, and drops drugs, drugs, deleterious drugs, into the cup! Mix it, mix it, harlot! mix it well.—'Tis done.—Now, take the cup, and seek for the lips of unsuspecting innocence; that's right—that's she—that's Harriet—my dear, darling Harriet—my own Harriet's Harriet!

Mark, what tranquillity sits upon that beauteous brow—what celestial resignation reigns in that sweet countenance! Dare you—dare you——Impious woman, hold, ere you thus dare, destroy one of the fairest works of the divine Creator; and, by the horrible and damning deed, entail eternal misery on your accursed soul! She dares, she dares——Strike her polluted arm! dash down the chalice!——Harriet, Harriet, hold! forbear!—Great God! she tastes—she drinks,—Oh, heaven!—Now see your havoc, fiend! See, see the change your hellish potion works: mark, how her lips swell—lo! her eye-balls glare—fires are lighted on her cheeks—her frantic bosom heaves tumultuously—she laughs aloud—she dances with a wild fantastic giddy step—she reels—Save her! save her! save my child!—No—she falls, she falls—never—never to rise again!'

" Such were the frightful ejaculations of this old madman, the echoes of which

are ever on my ears. Even now, though Effington has piously spared enough from his own wealth to obtain for him the asylum of a private mad-house—notwithstanding my conviction, that chains, and bars, and bolts, confine the lunatic—still, still, in spite of every effort of mind, every energy of reason, his spectre haunts me. I see him nightly in my chamber; the mirror on my toilette shows the very fiend and chalice which his imagination drew; he crosses me in my walks; he seats himself with me in the carriage; at the dinner-table, at the card table, he is present; and even from the profound slumbers of my bed I am awakened by his frenzied exclamations. I see his withered arms draw back my curtains, and his hollow eyes glare round my couch, searching for his Harriet. These are chimeras of the brain—I know them to be such, and the wealth which I enjoy I have abundant testimonies is sub-

stantial. Yet, yet, Constantia, omnipotent as is the golden magic, for all the purposes of outward show, respect, and reputation, its power reaches not the heart—holds not the slightest sway in the mind's dominion!"

As Lyttleton pronounced the last sentence, he raised his eye from the papers, which he held in his hands. Mr. White sat with his elbows on his knees, his face covered by the palms of his hands. The countenances of Emma Clarendon and Lancaster evinced their deep and tender sympathy for the venerable sufferer; and Lyttleton himself was deeply affected.

The pause occasioned White to look up; when, fixing his eyes with a calm grief upon Emma, he said: "I should, on your account, sweet creature, have

checked our benefactor in the recital of several parts of this correspondence; had I been able to devise a form of words myself, in which, to the chaste ear, I could convey a tale of truth necessary for you to know, yet so extremely painful for you to hear. Innocence must tremble at the discovery of such infamous snares, and ignorance of the world will occasion incredulity of their existence. May my poor Harriet's fate be the only instance of such depravity!

Lyttleton. Unhappy father, my heart has bled for you! How poignant must the pangs of that parental breast have been! How complete the woe, the misery, the despair, that wrought at length the total overthrow of reason! What say you, Mr. Lancaster, did you believe that in the catalogue of human calamities, such afflictions as Mr. White's were to be found; or that among the vices and de-

pravities of human nature, such crimes as these existed?

Lancaster. Indeed, Sir, I feel a strong reluctance in admitting, incontrovertible as they are, even these proofs that "such things are!"

White. Long may your incredulity remain in force, young gentleman! Never, never may your heart be taught experimentally such lacerating lessons of mankind!

But let me close my [illegible]s tale with as much brevity as possible.—When my poor child awakened from that horrid trance, into which the sorceries of D'Entreville had thrown her, she found herself in the power of Gordon, and felt that she was lost as Harriet Effington for ever. She prayed for death; but, thanks to God, the impression of Christian principles was too deeply fixed upon her soul to suffer her for a moment to indulge a thought of suicide. A prisoner in every

sense of the word, she was confined for several months in a cottage belonging to some creature of the libertine Gordon, in an obscure part of Wales, where she gave birth to a daughter!

Many will blame her—very few will accurately define the motives of my poor Harriet, in the resolution she formed of abandoning the innocent offspring of so criminal a father. She herself scarcely understood the principles of her own conduct. She confessed to me, that, soon after she first saw Gordon, she became alarmed by sentiments which she had never known before:—that she never permitted her eyes to look on him, without emotions which she considered to be criminal indulgences; and that in bringing her mind to shut out the admission of a thought, which kindled the recollection of his person, she felt as if she was making a sacrifice of inclination at the altar of duty and religion. But after that horrible ca-

tastrophe, she viewed him with an indescribable disgust; her brain became frenzied at his presence; and her soul sickened, as at some loathsome object, whenever his image was obtruded on her memory!

With these feelings, she had unalterably determined never to permit him voluntarily into her presence; and she swore, that the nutriment of her breast should never be afforded to that being, which could only claim a monster for the author of its existence.

She kept her resolution.—It was in vain Gordon laboured, with indefatigable pains, to alter her determination. As one grand mean of lessening her abhorrence of him, he collected a mass of evidence to prove the comparatively innocent part which he had played in this infernal drama; and the letters we have just heard read, procured by and from D'Entreville, were part of his proofs. These testimonials

my unhappy Harriet treasured, and delivered to me, when Providence blessed me with return of reason.—Sir, I have kept them next to my heart, from that moment to the present; and would not change them for the richest gem that shines in monarchs' crowns.

The dear martyr, much as she rejoiced to find, that, in the horrible conspiracy, part of the guilt and infamy which she had laid to Gordon's charge was thus removed, still stedfastly adhered to what she deemed a pious resolution. After the child was born, Harriet remained beneath the roof, which was its birth-place, only till nature gave her frame sufficient strength to fly from it for ever.

The first use she made of her liberty was to visit the humble grave, in which she had been told, and all the world believed, that I was buried. It was in the church-yard of a hamlet in the environs of the metropolis, where an old man,

whom it pleased Heaven in reality to release, was buried, from the place of my confinement, under the name, and as the corpse, of William Penn White.—Yes, Sir, not only was I thus buried while living, but my will, which I never made, was proved in Doctors' Commons, bequeathing all I had, or ever should become entitled to, to Effington. From the den of misery, where I was kept till these frauds were duly solemnized, I was afterwards removed to a pauper asylum, where I was received by the name and in the character of Joseph Potter, a pauper from the north of England; and in that sad abode I was a dark inhabitant, at the very period when my Harriet dropped tears of penitence and affection on the sod which she believed covered my mouldering remains! Happily, the wisdom and the vigilance of our legislators, and our magistrates, now render such deeds impracticable!

Under a false name, and with an altered person—so altered that even I, in sound mind, should scarcely have recognised the face without the voice—my poor child, whose extraordinary fate made her a widow and orphan, with a husband and a father living, laboured with her hands for bread to support that life which her religious principles alone compelled her to endure.

London, she rightly thought, was the place where, though once so well known, she would in her present altered state and character be most obscure; and London, also, was the only place for the exertion of those talents by which she was now to obtain subsistence.

She embroidered—she wrought fancy works—and she painted on satin and velvet.

One day, while she was waiting at a shop in Bond-street to be paid for some work she had taken home, a voice, from

the upper part of the house, repeatedly screamed out—" Murder!"—The shopkeeper ran up stairs, and Harriet, by an instinctive impulse, followed him.

On the floor of the drawing-room was stretched the apparently lifeless body of a man; near it was a bloody dagger; and on a sofa sat a woman, with her hair dishevelled, leaning her elbow on a table, on which were fruit and wine. A youth in livery, who had given the alarm, overwhelmed with horror and affright, had sunk into a chair.

Harriet started with horror and surprise: the slain man was Eaton—the female D'Entreville!

As Harriet entered the apartment, the eyes of D'Entreville flashed fire—she started from the sofa—stretched forth both her arms—by a violent motion of the head tossed back her long black hair, which till that instant had concealed her bleeding breast—exclaimed, " Ghost of Ef-

fington!" I come—I come! — Let your tortures be keener than this—(*tearing open her wound*)—let your fires be fiercer than these—(*putting her hand to her forehead*) —or I shall laugh—laugh—laugh to all eternity!"—And, expiring, she sunk on the corpse of the man she had murdered!

Lyttleton. Such, then, was the mortal end of D'Entreville! Oh! horrible!—most horrible of all human spectacles, "*A female Atheist!*"—Would I could believe no D'Entreville survived this one!—Alas, what would the Christian Poet* now exclaim, who, threescore years ago, wrot thus:

"Atheists have been but rare, since nature's birth;
Till now, she-Atheists ne'er appeared on earth.
Ye men of deep researches, say, whence springs
This daring character, in timorous things?
Who start at feathers, from an insect fly,
A match for nothing——but the DEITY!"

Ah, Emma—Emma! sweet are

* Dr. Young.

sorrows stealing from those eyes—the pious tear of pity on the cheek of innocence is, with reverence I speak, an incense in the sight of God himself, as pure and fragrant as ascends through morning's dew-drops from the budding-rose! Oh, ever—ever may the same sentiments of compassion for the criminal be cherished from the same pure source—the horror of the crime! But, lovely maid, fly—avoid more fearfully than you would the Mohawk's murdering hatchet, the tongue, however silver-toned—the pen, however smoothly flowing, that dare insinuate an invitation to partake the Atheist's doubts! Nor reckon too securely upon your present shield of faith;—doubtless there was once a time when even D'Entreville believed, and feared, a God.

White. How justly do you speak. I am every hour more and more amazed at your discourse;—for see, here is a passage in one of the poor creature's letters, which,

as it is not connected with our story, I did not mark; but it is so strikingly illustrative of your idea, that she once believed, I will, with permission, read it now: it is in a letter to her friend De Courcy.

(Extract.)

"Do you know, Constantia, that I have undergone a species of torment, of which it is beyond my power to give you even a faint description;—after all, I verily believe that I am but half a heroine. We were invited to dine with an old acquaintance and school-fellow of Gordon's, an opulent tradesman of London, who has a country house near London. Before dinner, we were shown the various apartments of the mansion, a silly custom with some of these sort of people; and, as I was looking at a prospect from the window, I was accidentally left alone in the chamber of Miss Johnson, the good people's eldest daughter, a girl of sixteen!

"This slight circumstance was the source of torment to me the whole day—it has deprived me of my rest all night! How so? As thus—The door shutting with the wind, occasioned me to turn round from the window, when the first thing that caught my eye was an admirable likeness, in water colours, of the old lady of the mansion, drawn by the occupier of this little nest—as some lines of filial affection, written underneath, expressed.——What occasioned such a sickness at my heart as I read these lines? I had a mother once—I *loved* her—till when?—till I became impatient of her anxiety for my welfare; and then I *hated*, first the unwelcome advice—and then the adviser!——What a fool am I?—Do you know that this testimony of filial love, and this expression of pious sentiments, brought tears, where long—oh, very long!—they had been strangers. I turned towards the window again. On a little

table, covered with muslin white as snow, were placed, in a regularity of order emblematical of the calm mind of their owner, the few appendages of her toilette. Her mirror, ornamented with a drapery of white muslin, looped up with rosettes of white ribband, was so placed that her waking eyes must catch the reflected image of her own countenance. A prayer-book and a bible actually formed part of the chamber furniture; and here and there a rose leaf peeped between the pages, an index to some passage of the sacred writings, or some holy orison, that had peculiarly impressed her. I read—I trembled;—I closed the book;—and my perturbed spirit would instinctively have flown from a retreat which courted the indulgence of innocent pleasures, tranquil contemplation, and fearless slumbers; but my feet were spell bound! Whichever way my eye was turned, some object, emblem of an unsullied mind, arose to torture me.

Small shelves of books, neatly arranged, suspended by white ribbands, were ornaments on each side of her virgin bed; here was an unspotted writing-desk—there her implements for drawing. A sketch of the park, taken from the window, exhibited her talents in one species of employment; a piece of needle-work in progress, and a manuscript translation, into Italian, from Hume's History of England, were further testimonials of her industry. All this, Constantia, was too much to bear. My head became giddy—I grew faint—I sunk, with the sickness of death, into a chair! *You* can understand the nature of the disease that overpowered me: you must remember—you cannot fail to call to mind those days, when I first received you under my father's roof, in just such a study as Eliza's chamber. Oh, why is it that the same scenes, the very self-same images, which then afforded me serene delight, and tranquil joy, have now roused self-anger and horror in my breast?—Surely

I have but dreamed—it cannot be possible, that, at ANY age, *I* found calm delight in solitude; that this heart, so long the seat of guilty passions, EVER knew that peace, which only innocence enjoys. Oh, torturing recollection!—Yes—there was a time, when the mind even of D'Entreville *was*, as Eliza's *is*; yes—there *was* a time, when solitude did not affright me, and when I did not shudder at the contemplation of a GOD; but could with humble joy believe, that, if a God there is, '*He must delight in virtue*.'—Now—— but I will not think—Why be a self-tormentor? Away with meditations, that only tend to fire my brain!—To oblivion for ever be consigned this vision of Eliza; of her chamber—her bible—and of all those accurate demonstrations of a happy innocent state of mind—such as was that of D'Entreville, when D'Entreville was—the contrast, in every respect, to WHAT SHE NOW IS."

Lyttleton. (*speaking solemnly, clasping his hands together, and casting his eyes on the floor*) To what she *now* is!—(*after a pause*)—Miserable, miserable victim of daring infidelity—of impious presumption! (*After another pause, turning to Emma*) Oh, Miss Clarendon, remember D'Entreville; and at no period of our lives, let any of us, by sin or sophistry, be tempted, for one moment, to relinquish our FAITH IN GOD, which is the only stedfast barrier to guilt—the only genuine guard of virtue!——

Now, then, Mr. White will have the goodness to continue his interesting narrative, and to tell us what followed the horrible event he has described to us.

White. I have here, Sir, a copy of the deposition of the servant boy, taken before the coroner. It is not very long, and as it is in some instances retrospective and elucidatory, I will, with your permission, read it.

(*Reading*)—" JAMES PALMER, SWORN: Was servant to the deceased, Henrietta, Countess D'Entreville—had lived about twelve months in her service—the Countess had lodgings at Brompton, and at Richmond, besides those in Bond-street—might have other lodgings, but not to his knowledge: he was hired for Bond-street lodgings only. Countess was there sometimes two or three days; seldom longer than three days; sometimes did not come there for a month. Had large parties twice since he lived with her—dinner was provided by people from a tavern—chiefly used the lodgings for small card parties—never knew Sir Edward Newington come to Bond-street. Had heard some other servants of the Countess say, Sir Edward had been at Richmond lodgings. Countess slept in Bond-street on the night before this affair. Often received letters from abroad; always inquired, the first question, if there were any letters. On the

morning of the seventeenth of July, a foreign courier came with a letter for the Countess, which he would deliver only to herself: the letter seemed to agitate her very much: he, the deponent, was sent off instantly, with a note from the Countess, to Mr. Eaton's chambers, in Gray's Inn: saw Mr. Eaton, and delivered the note into his own hand. He seemed much agitated at the contents of the note: told him to wait, then said he need not wait—but to let the Countess know he would dine in Bond-street—Dinner was provided—nobody but Mr. Eaton and the Countess dined. Waited at table: conversation was in some foreign language—believes French; don't know any language but English. Countess was very violent—Mr. Eaton was very pale. Placed the dessert and wine after dinner as usual—dessert knives and spoons only on table. Bell rang violently about half an hour after dinner: Countess and Mr.

Eaton both walking in great agitation about the room: Countess said, "Show this man the door!" Mr. Eaton said, "The Countess is mad.—You may retire, Sir!" Countess stamped her foot: "Go, at your peril, James;—this man will drive me to distraction!" She then walked up to Mr. Eaton, and talked in *foreign* to him—she seemed quite in a passion—was often in a passion, but never so violently as this: snatched the letter out of Mr. Eaton's hands,—it was the foreign letter that came in the morning; threw herself on the sofa—tore off the ornaments from her head.—Mr. Eaton went to her, talked in foreign to her, seemingly trying to pacify her: suddenly the Countess pulled a dagger from her bosom—said something in *foreign*, with great violence—and then, all in a moment, plunged the dagger into the heart of Mr. Eaton, and then in her own breast—is quite sure it was the Countess gave both

the wounds;—run out of the room, screaming murder.—It was all done in a moment—there was no possibility to prevent it—knows no cause for the quarrel but the letter."

(Copy of the letter alluded to in Palmer's deposition, as translated from the Spanish.—No superscription or address.)

"All is over—you must die;—the folly of Eaton has completed your destruction, which the avarice of Effington began. This miser expired in one of the dungeons of the Inquisition, about ten days ago.—He was to have undergone the torture on the very day he died—probably killed by his terrors. His immense wealth has thus slipped out of the hands of the Duke, who is enraged to a degree I never witnessed before—though what I *have*

witnessed, since I have been cursed with the duties of this secretaryship, you partly know. Among Effington's papers was found a letter, most unguardedly written by Eaton, in which your name appears. The Duke, after consulting with the cold-blooded Italian ex-priest, Zarnelli, now in favour, *has sealed your death warrant.* They deem the discovery of your former commission in England probable, from this proof of the indiscretion of those whom you trust; and the very moment after the receipt of this letter (if it reaches you living) *may be your last!* There are twenty agents newly added to our *corps*—escape, therefore, is impossible.—You will fall inevitably, by an invisible hand, unless with characteristic courage, brave but unfortunate Henrietta, you disappoint these hirelings, and their masters, by your own heroism. If possible, contrive to let me have one farewell letter; but it can only be ventured through the hands of him

who delivers this—which *instantly destroy*, if my life is worth your care.—Farewell for ever!"

Lyttleton. This letter was published then?

White. It was, and as I have been told caused the destruction of the writer.

Lyttleton. Undoubtedly it did—I was in Spain at this crisis, and, what will much surprise you, I then knew the wretched Effington, and was entrusted by him with the disposal of all his wealth, and a dying confession, containing part of his history. He called himself there by another name, but as you related the events, I felt conviction there could not be a second Effington. This Secretary of the Duke, the writer of this warning to the Countess, was removed by poison. I obtained there, also, much information on the

subject of the *corps* of desperate agents which he alludes to, and which, if divulged, would make the nobles and the gentry of England pause, and examine deeply, before they place the security of their lives, and the secrets of their bosoms and their families, in the keeping of *foreign domestics*, nine times out of ten, enemies by prejudice, and too frequently spies and betrayers from mercenary motives!—But to return to your daughter.

White. The effect of such a scene of horror upon my Harriet may be conceived, but cannot be described. She, too, was compelled to attend the coroner, as an evidence; and on that occasion was nearly driven to the necessity of making her real name known: but as the ejaculation of the wretched D'Entreville was not understood by any but herself, and she had retained sufficient self-possession to conceal the additional cause of her own emotion, for which the horrid spectacle was

of itself apparently sufficient, the affair passed off without that disclosure.

A very few sentences more will now put you in complete possession of all I have to tell. Many a day of grief and woe my child continued to endure existence in humble obscurity, until another singular occurrence brought about our meeting. At this time she lodged at a glover's, in one of the streets at the back of Piccadilly; and her landlady, who was of a kind and benevolent disposition, was the only person in the world with whom she held any social intercourse. She had remarked that Miss Oldfield went regularly once a week to some place a few miles from town; and, upon enquiry, learnt, that it was to discharge a melancholy duty to an unfortunate brother, who had been deprived of his reason for a considerable time, but who was then convalescent, and was soon to leave the madhouse. On one of these occasions, Miss

Oldfield requested my Harriet to accompany her; and the very house to which she was thus providentially attracted, was the abode of that unhappy sire whom she had so long considered as consigned to dust!

Upon their arrival, Miss Oldfield was directed to seek her brother in the garden —so providentially was it ordered:—for had Mr. Oldfield been then in the house, I never should have beheld—never have embraced my Harriet,—never should have breathed the air of liberty—never have known this hour!

From the grated window of a two pair of stairs back room, I had the privilege—or the torture shall I call it—of looking into the garden; and it was so ordained, that at the very moment when Harriet and her companions were returning towards the house, my face was applied closely to the window bars.——Our eyes met—we saw, we knew each other!—Expect not a description of the scene!

My daughter, as she afterwards often related to me, was instantly struck with the full conviction of what she deemed a strong resemblance of my features. She shrieked unconsciously—seized the arm of Miss Oldfield—and, but for the support of her brother, would have fainted.

Obliged to assign some cause for her apparently strange conduct, she told them that a person had appeared at that window so like a deceased relative, most dear to her, that if she could have indulged a doubt of his decease, she should believe it to be himself.

The brother of Miss Oldfield said—"The poor gentleman whom you saw has been here a long time. His name is Potter: he is very harmless; but, as patients of his description are never permitted to converse with any body but the keeper, all I know of him is, that in his paroxysms he raves a great deal about his daughter Harriet——"

Imagine my dear child's feelings.—Nature prompting, almost forcing her to exclamations, to acts of desperation——but Providence, as I humbly believe, imposing a cautious restraint, which she often described as truly supernatural.—

"Potter—Potter!——Yet—Harriet—his daughter Harriet!"—were the only words that escaped her lips; but her eyes spoke a volume of amazement, of horror, and yet of hope.

Miss Oldfield was as discreet as she was benevolent.—Enforcing, by her looks and gestures, silence at that time, she speedily quitted the place; and, before they reached her own house, such was the power of sympathy, Harriet had confided to her the hopes and horrors of her distracted mind.

As to myself, the same important moment that impressed these ideas on my daughter's brain, struck mine with a sudden illumination, painful beyond description.

I saw—I knew my Harriet! In many

and long intervals of lucid reason, I had sufficiently made myself acquainted with my own real state; but I had never suffered my knowledge to be suspected by my keepers. In the recurring paroxysms of despair, I often called upon my Harriet—often my diseased imagination presented her before me, in endless varieties of situation; but that moment, that miraculous moment, which directed our long-severed eyes to flash their mingled beams upon each other—oh, where is the power that can describe that moment!——I will not attempt it.—'Twas a different vision from the phantasies that imagination had so often placed before me—and yet the difference cannot be defined by language. Instinct gave me wings, and directed their course; I flew to the door of my apartment—alas!—bars and bolts resisting my strongest efforts, brought the recollection of my actual state so painfully upon me, that I sunk senseless on the floor. How long

I remained in that situation I am unconscious, but the first instant of recovery hurried me back to the spot from which I had beheld the vision;—it was gone! Oh, the excruciating agony of that moment!—I doubted whether I had really beheld my child, or whether my poor distracted mind had only been visited by another maddening dream. There was, however, one feature of this last vision novel and striking: the appearance of my Harriet walking with Oldfield, whom I had often noticed, and bowed to, from my window, but whose form had never before been brought into association with my child. There was a slender thread of hope in this idea to which I clung; and I watched, hour after hour, for a chance of seeing him again.

At the fall of night—a quiet moonlight night—I saw him stealing softly underneath my window. He directed his eyes towards me;—I made him sensible that I observed him. He returned my signal by

one equally significant, but silent. You perhaps all know that there is a method of conversing, telegraphically, by means of the fingers. Oldfield tried the experiment, and our joy was mutual at discovering that our alphabets were thoroughly understood by each other.

From that moment my escape was planned;—in a few days it was effected;—and I folded my long absent, my long lost child to my bosom, under the roof of Miss Oldfield.

Much had we to say,—much to inquire; but I waive all that passed—you will imagine it. Nothing that I could urge, however, would induce my Harriet to consent to any attempt on my part to recover our rights. The sense of shame, whether right or wrong, was so strong upon her, that though she consented to my bearing my own name, she never assumed her husband's. Not one solitary friend, among all those whom in prospe-

rity I had cherished, was there, indeed, to whom, with any probability of success, I could have applied for assistance, had I made myself known; and I therefore yielded my wishes to her will, and was supported by her labour for several years.

On the subject of her child, as I called it, but which title she never sanctioned, we differed. It was my opinion, that duty required her to acquaint herself of its destiny; but my efforts were fruitless. Unknown to her, however, I made some enquiries privately, and learnt, that the woman who kept the cottage, to which Harriet had been conveyed, died about twelve months after the birth of the child—that Gordon, at that time, himself conveyed away the little girl, no one knew whither; but it was conjectured that she went with him abroad.

Lyttleton. This coincidence of circumstances and events would be sufficient evidence, in any court of justice, to esta-

blish this young lady's claims to be your heiress, my dear Sir, if you were an emperor. Give her, then, your heart—for I have no doubt she is your daughter's child; and I will enable you to bequeath her a dowry worthy the grand-daughter of a British merchant. There is, however, a conclusive proof in our possession, which we have not yet examined——Emma, where is the letter your good Mrs. Wainwright gave to you? We will compare the autography with Gordon's letters in your possession, Mr. White.

[Their identity was visible—was striking—was indisputable! The old man folded Emma, with fond rapture, to his bosom;—the amiable girl shed tears of tenderness, but was too much agitated by her feelings to be able to give them utterance;—and the whole groupe were for some minutes silent!]

Lancaster. There is still one short link

wanting, Sir, to complete the chain of events which brought us here together.

White. I understand you.—Mr. Oldfield's unhappy situation had been a heavy drain upon the straitened finances of his sister. A relation, in whose honesty she confided, deceived her—ruined her. She was compelled to submit to a statute of bankruptcy;—every thing was taken from her;—this new distress revived her brother's malady, and finally broke her heart. These events compelled us to seek a new, and far more lowly lodging. Our means—or rather, let me say, my dear Harriet's earnings—grew less and less in value, compared with the increasing price of the humblest necessaries of life. I became more and more infirm—grief and anxiety preyed on us both; and she paid so much attention to my ailments, that she was compelled to relinquish a large portion of her usual labours; and was consequently abridged in her income. At length a ner-

vous fever seized her, and totally prevented the continuance of her exertions. For a time, we lived upon our little hoarded treasure; but, alas! sickness soon exhausts the savings of the poor. "*All going out, and no coming in,*" is a phrase that has been perhaps in your ears before; but they alone can truly understand the pangs of such a state, who feel them.

My poor dear affectionate heart broken Harriet, was at length relieved, from the endurance of these pangs, and from bodily pain, by the welcome hand of smiling death.—And though it was on the bed of poverty, nay of penury, that her last sigh was breathed; yet, oh! how far more grateful was it to my soul to witness such a pious, penitent, resigned departure of my beloved child, than to have beheld her a living monument of splendid prostitution!

My sufferings at this event were by no means keen; I had felt so many wounds,

far more acute, that now with resignation I bowed to the Disposer of man's destinies, and awaited my own release with tranquillity. I was planning some means of earning bread—I wanted only bread—when a paralytic stroke deprived me of the use of my limbs. What were the honest people, under whose roof a pennyless, paralytic old man of seventy lay, to do with him? The utmost produce of their ceaseless labour but poorly fed, clothed, and sheltered their seven children and themselves. They mentioned my case, which became indeed their own, to the master tailor for whom the husband worked: he was a humane man, and happened at that time to be overseer of the poor. The relief he afforded was not a splendid boon, but it was to me a most acceptable concession;—he obtained my admission into the workhouse of the parish, in which I was a pauper, by *casualty*—instead of causing me the pain

and mortification of a removal to that where the law might have compelled me to be conveyed as a pauper by *settlement!*

Yes, ye proud ones! who calculate on inexhaustible supplies of wealth, hear it, and reflect!—A merchant, once possessing more than one hundred thousand pounds, lived to see the last departing shadow of his riches—lived to acknowledge his admission among the parish poor, a boon of mercy!

Lyttleton. Grant me your hand, worthy, excellent man! In you I honour one of the most exalted of my species. The arrows of adversity, which are stuck so thick about you, are trophies of a valour more worthy of the homage of mankind, than crowns of martial victory. What is the glory of slaying millions, compared with the bright wreath obtained by virtue triumphant over adversity?—Blessed be the hour that brought you to my knowledge! Your tale presents a crowd of thoughts—

gives birth to a variety of conjectures, and opens to my mind projects, which at some future opportunity I will impart to you. In the mean time, it is my duty to restore to you some part of that wealth, which has so long and so unjustly been withheld from you.—I hold at present nearly two hundred thousand pounds, derived from Effington—of whom I have much to tell. A quarter of that sum I consider to belong to you; and as no doubt remains upon my mind that Emma is your Harriet's child, I thus assume the office of Lord Chancellor, and decree—that fifty thousand pounds shall be secured to you and her; but on such conditions as a knowledge of mankind convinces me are necessary for the guidance of virtuous, no less than the restriction of vicious inclinations.——Silence! I forbid all further parlance—I rise.—The court's adjourned.

CHAPTER V.

SCENE 1.

The following day Lyttleton invited Lancaster to a walk on the sea shore, with the design of entering into confidential conversation with him on his past conduct, and his future views.

The prelude necessary to such a dialogue was not finished, when, as they approached a hollow in the cliffs, which the Flimflamtonians called a cave, a voice exclaimed—"It will do—it will do—it will do!—Match it who can!"—and forth rushed a man, with a scroll of paper

in his hand, which he flourished over his head in the air. It was Mason. Turning round at the sound of their footsteps on the pebbles, he perceived his auditors.

Mason. Angels and ministers of grace defend me! Is it thy spirit, Lancaster, that I see before me, or art thou in the flesh? If so, my prayer is, that a little more may grow upon thy bones, and that more lustre may be in those eyes, which thou dost glare withal!

Lyttleton. Had I not met you, Sir, at Garraway's, some time ago, I should believe that I encountered some mad poet among these rocks and cliffs. As it is, I am surprised to find a gentleman of your avocation in this sequestered spot.

Mason. Pardon me, most mysterious stranger, though not now so mysterious as when I saw you last, 'midst Jews and Gentiles, in 'Change-alley, Cornhill—pardon me, if I say that you display an ignorance of what Othello's occupation really

is, if you suppose, because you find me here, "Othello's occupation is no more!" I have been hard at work even now, to the very moment when I quitted yonder cave. It may be taking too great a liberty with you, Sir, but had I encountered my friend Lancaster alone, I should have hailed the meeting for a *happy omen*, and should have availed myself of his genius and judgment, not for the first time, Sir, by reciting to him the production of the last half hour.

Lancaster. I perceive, Mr. Mason, that however much changed I am, and in every respect imaginable I am altogether changed, you are the same Mason still. It becomes me, however, to state to you, that but for the extraordinary philanthropy of this——

Lyttleton. (looking displeased.) Sir—you forget my request—I was going to say my injunction—but I have no *right, certainly*, to command. Pray, Mr. Mason, if my

presence does not prevent Mr. Lancaster the pleasure of hearing your production; will you permit me to share it?

Mason. Your condescension, Sir, penetrates me deeply. I must premise, in order to account for a style which, otherwise would be deemed, perhaps, rather too florid, that these subjects are *got up* purposely for the ladies; and we find, Sir, that we can't be too flighty for their fair fancies.

Lyttleton. What is the subject?

Mason. That, Sir, which engrosses the attention of every female, from a duchess to a dairy-maid, within a circuit of fifty miles—the GRAND SUBSCRIPTION PUBLIC BREAKFAST at the New Assembly Rooms and Gardens.

Lancaster. Why that is a happy theme, for your talents, indeed, Mason; I know you excel in that line.

Mason. Do you think so? The sub-

ject is abominably hacknied, too. In the present state of the public appetite, *novelty, novelty* is the only marketable commodity; and, of course, we caterers *must* supply it. Now, as "*A Public Breakfast*" has been *done* a hundred times before, there can be nothing new in the *matter*—consequently, the *manner* is the only scope for invention. Thus, as the growling poet, Cowper, says of the young sparks of his time, that their ambition was "to commit the oldest sins the newest kind of way;" so is it the aim of us writers to describe the oldest scenes the newest kind of way—and I flatter myself that I have hit the mark. You must understand, Sir, that there is a sect, at present on the increase all over the kingdom, who, with a sort of sham sensibility for the poor, are on all occasions howling at the enjoyments and pastimes of the rich. Instead of exposing the morbid quality of this false feeling, our people of rank have very foolishly at-

tempted a compromise with it; and the consequence has been, a most grotesque and absurd conjunction of mirth and pity—of gaiety and compassion. Pleasure may be the real motive; but Philanthropy must be the pass-word, even to our amusements. To such an extreme is this tyranny carried, that a man of fashion, with a *cacoethes* for acting, is denied the opportunity of exciting mirth by his performance of tragedy, unless the play-bills announce that the laugh, though entirely at his expence, is productive of a "*Benefit*" to some worthy object of charity.

Lyttleton. In compliance with this taste of the times I suppose it is, that the profits of the public breakfast to-morrow, we are informed, are to be appropriated in aid of the subscriptions for the establishment of a Marine Infirmary at Flimflamton.

Mason. You are right, Sir; and though the motto on the *admission tickets*

is "*Vive la Bagatelle*," I assure you that the object of the proprietors of this divertisement is no *bagatelle*, as you will perceive from the little secret history, which, in my professional career, I have stumbled upon. Among those who have profited most by Mr. Flimflam's rage for building, is a certain fashionable architect, whose talents are unquestionably of the first order, but who is totally unconscious of that old maxim, which says, "it is possible to have too much of a good thing;" and who, therefore, when once he begins to *plan*, is with great difficulty induced to leave off. Having with the speed of magic, by the aid of Flimflam's wealth, erected, within the compass of a mile, as many public buildings as, in former times, a traveller met with between London and the ocean, he was at length about to explore some other spot, for the exercise of his powers of design; and had almost made up his mind to the bold idea of

levelling Stonehenge, and converting Salisbury Plain into a sort of Regent's Park, when, unluckily for that grand project, a nobleman arrived at Flimflamton, who having received very great benefit from the use of Sir William Paxton's Marine Baths at Tenby, in South Wales, was every where clamorous in praise of their utility, and the public spirit of their worthy proprietor.—"*Marine Baths!* Marine Baths! my dear Lord Norton!" exclaimed Mr. Adhere, our everlasting architect, at Flimflam's table after dinner; "Oh, what a doldrum have I been in! How shocking that such a charming plan should originate with any other man; and be carried into execution, too, in such a place as Tenby! Why, my Lord, though Tenby has lately obtained such notoriety, it is a mere speck upon a rock—a mere pimple of earth in comparison with this place. My dear Sir, we must have something better at Flimflamton, even if we build it by

subscription." "Subscription!" echoed Mr. Flint, the lawyer; "do you suppose Mr. Flimflam would submit to such an aspersion?" "Subscription!" re-echoed Lord Norton: "how singular! Do you know, Mr. Flimflam, that the thought occurred to me this very morning, that if Flimflamton were nearer the metropolis, it would be an excellent charity to erect Marine Baths here, with an Infirmary." "Most excellent idea! charming, charming, my Lord!" exclaimed Mr. Adhere: "already the thing is done. I have it—I have it. Is not the Duke of —— expected at your seat in a few days? I know his philanthropic spirit; and I am sure a word from you, my Lord, would gain us his name as *Patron* of the Flimflamton Marine Infirmary. You must persuade him to be here a week in person. We will procure popular preachers for a sermon at the New Chapel—popular singers for a Grand Concert—popular actresses for Readings—

and amateurs of fashion for plays;—being all, nominally, for the benefit of the Flimflamton Infirmary—but, in reality, for the benefit of every individual at Flimflamton: for such a series of fashionable amusements, for charitable purposes, will fill every nook and corner of the place with visitors of the highest rank, and consequently raise Flimflamton property cent. per cent. in value."

This last argument was omnipotent with Mr. Flimflam. — A plot of worthless ground, about a mile out of Flimflamton, was liberally given by the Banker, who, as the Duke was to be Patron and President, could *only* be *Treasurer*, and *retainer of all the patronage.*

Lord Norton, from a conviction of the usefulness of the plan—Mr. Flimflam, from a sense of self interest—and Mr. Adhere, from the love of a new job—all heartily concurred in the immediate adoption of the plan. And when the

sketch of an address to the public on the subject, was started, Mr. Flint observed, that a nephew of Yates, meaning your humble servant, was then fortunately at Moreton, whose abilities and opportunities were precisely those wanted to bring the design before the world, with all the aids of newspaper *eclat*.

Such, Sir, was the origin of to-morrow's GRAND PUBLIC BREAKFAST; and such the cause of my introduction to the celebrated Mr. Flimflam. And here I hold a specimen of those talents, which Mr. Flint has, I fear, too highly praised. But you must judge. Only bear in mind, that NOVELTY—NOVELTY is the aim; and, as I said before, in this case all chance of *striking* arises, from a new manner; for Charity and Public Breakfasts are *stale materials*. Now, then;—suppose you are opening a fashionable newspaper, you will be astonished to see, at the top of a column, an impression from an engraving in

wood: the design—CHARITY, *apparently fainting, supported, in a waltzing attitude, by* HARLEQUIN—Is not that good?—Underneath, in large type,

FLIMFLAMTON GRAND DEJEUNÉ.

And then, instead of beginning—"On Tuesday last, this long-talked-of entertainment, &c. &c."—I dash out thus:—(*reading*)—

"Hither, ye cynics, of whatever sect, "whose sour visages, for ever turned to-"wards gloomy views of life, depict the "state of man's existence as one unvary-"ing scene of tragedy, hither, and be-"hold, for once at least, a vision without "woe!"

Lyttleton. "*A vision without woe!*"—Fine alliteration!

Mason. Alliteration, Sir, is the grand charm for catching delicate ears.

Lyttleton. I suppose you may now and then dispense with sense, but there always *must* be *sound.*

Mason. You are quite right. The next paragraph is in the climax style. (*reading*)—

"The light of a long looked for day "now dawns auspicious on Flimflamton's "shores! The rising sun illumes a cloud-"less sky—the tranquil ocean yields the "wished-for tide—soft gales give gentle "motion to the genial air—and gay Flim-"flamton gives—a PUBLIC BREAKFAST "to a Royal Duke!"

Lancaster. That climax smacks a little of plagiary—I recollect something very like it.

Mason. Coincidence, possibly—but not plagiarism, upon my honour. The thought at the close of the next paragraph all the world will own to be original. (*reading*)—

"Hail happy morn—happy Flimflam-"ton, hail! For ever blazoned in the "page of fashion's records, shall this day's "glories shine, and this day's joys be

"registered; glories and joys which spring "from the united powers of art and "nature—joint contributions from men "and gods! For what would thy smiles "avail, oh Phœbus, Æolus, and Neptune, "without the talents, taste, and libe- "rality of Downing, of Catalani, Leanders, "Waud, Zopel, and Flimflam?

"Though sunshine, and fair wind "and weather, be requisites, be indis- "pensables of a sea side public breakfast, "yet what were these alone, without "those tasteful decorations which delight "the eye; those vocal and those instru- "mental strains of harmony, which en- "chant the ear; delicious viands, which "invite the lips to taste them; and stages "chalked with fancy's fairy magic, which "sets the heels a dancing! And what "again were all these earthly combina- "tions of delights, did the heavens "frown?—Though opulence and taste "prepare the pleasures of elysium for "expectant thousands, were Æolus and

"Neptune unkindly to blow up a storm,
"how soon would they convert the
"brilliant paradise into a dreary scene,
"which only water-wagtails could enjoy!"

Lancaster. Well done, Mason, that is original; I recollect no parallel to that, either in Della Crusca, Laura, or any other writer for the diurnal press. The idea that the united aid of men and gods is necessary to a public breakfast, though perfectly true, was never so happily illustrated before; and is only surpassed by the image of the water-wagtails, which is certainly as original as sublime.

Lyttleton. Excellent, indeed, Mr. Mason. It has been justly remarked to be the prerogative of genius alone, to bring before the mind those unexpected figures, which, though they would never of themselves have occurred to us, are no sooner struck out of the author's fancy, and presented to our view, than we instantly recognise the aptness of the allusion, and are im-

pressed with all the consequent reflections and combinations intended to be produced. Now, on this occasion, what can be more to the point than the water-wagtail? I think I see the most enchanting gardens, embellished with every device of art; I see an orchestra filled with first-rate performers; I see tables, oblong, square, and round, spread with the most tempting collation; and then, suddenly, I hear a clap of thunder—hear the wind howling through the trees—the rain pattering on the orchestra; I see the performers bagging their instruments, and buttoning up their throats; the waiters sheltering their heads with napkins, turning up the table-cloths, and pocketting the spoil. The storm increases; the orchestra is emptied; the waiters vanish; and a scene that has cost some thousand pounds in preparation, presents no living creature, but a few water-wag tails, dipping their feathers in the deluged walks. Thus you

perceive the train of ideas, generated by the happy image of the water-wagtail, is naturally such as the author wished to create, and is an admirable proof of the truth of my definition of the power of genius. But pray, Mr. Mason, seriously speaking, is this merely an exercise for your talents, or is it, as you hinted, a piece of bespoke work?

Lancaster. Oh, depend upon it, Sir, my friend Mason's time is too valuable to throw away in exercises.—Is it not, Mason?

Mason. I make no reserves with you, my good fellow; you remember I once had reason to think you would be one of our corps. I confess to you, then, that I have been successful beyond all expectation in the profession, and have at present more demands for my pen than I can possibly satisfy. I could, indeed, easily supply every day in the week half a dozen columns upon the *Corn Laws*, the *Catholic*

Question, the *Bullion Question*, our *Maritime Rights*, and such *hum-drum* subjects, without a moment's thought; but a description of A PUBLIC BREAKFAST is not every body's work! There are a hundred *hacknies*, who, at low prices, will *scrawl* such *heavy* articles; but how few writers are capable of fingering the feather of fashion! I have taken up the light plume, and have aimed in this specimen to produce a *chef d'œuvre.*—Tell me now, candidly, Gentlemen, as far as you have heard, do you think it will do?

Lyttleton. Excellent—excellent!

Lancaster. Oh, really, admirable!

Mason. You encourage me to proceed. You are aware in how very pampered a state the public appetite for this species of writing is.—Plain facts would no more go down now, than plain pudding.—The surfeited town, Sir, requires confectionary literature, as much as confectionary food. Well, then, after that sort of solemn,

heroic movement for an opening, I just state the dull facts in as few words as possible, and then break off at once into a sort of *allegro* trot, or quick march of syllables, thus: *(reading)*—

"Pleasure floating on every breeze, "brought joy into every face;—e'en inani- "mate bathing-machines were moved mer- "rily backwards and forwards; while "dippers and guides, full of glee and good "humour, wished the Duke at Flimflam- "ton for ever. Donkies, ponies, and chaises, "were in such requisition, that nursery- "maids and foot-boys, were seen giggling "and grinning, scampering and scram- "bling, and playfully wrestling, to obtain "for their young lords and ladies the "triumph of possessing, on this gala day, "the ass most in favour and fashion.

"Invalids shared the general inspira- "tion, and smiled; even loungers for- "got for an hour the horrors of *ennui*; "and the countenance of every inha-

" bitant and visitor of this delightful
" aquatic retreat evinced that, at least, the
" moments then fleeting were those of
" unalloyed joy."

After this, I gradually fall into the familiar, or chit-chat style, which is necessary for the introduction of characteristic anecdotes of the company, a description of dresses, and other common-place matter, concluding with a list of names.

Lyttleton. Sir, I beg you will accept my best thanks for this favour.

Mason. Oh, Sir, I am the party obliged. In the honour of the attention of such a personage as the Lord of the Manor of Moreton, I incur an obligation impossible to be redeemed. I would rather shrink into nonentity, than incur the risk of being deemed too obtrusive upon your attention, Sir; but I feel a sort of restless impulse, to avail myself of this opportunity which Fortune has given me, of soliciting the honour of your

commands in my way. Your wealth, Sir, I am given to understand, is superior even to Mr. Flimflam's; and though Uncle Yates has almost extorted a promise of my services in the Flimflam interest, I myself feel every inclination to prefer that of Lyttleton.

Lyttleton. I thank you, Sir; but I do not comprehend the nature of the services you are so good as to tender.

Lancaster. In order to appreciate their worth, it is necessary to inform you, Sir, that my friend Mason is a Barrister, who practices, not in the Court of Chancery, King's Bench, or Common Pleas; but in one, the increasing prerogatives and power of which you will learn with surprise, if you remain but a short time longer in England. Mason is an Advocate, Sir, at the BAR of the COURT of PUBLIC OPINION. And when you recollect, that this Court is *perpetually* open, for *special purposes*; and that in London there are

regular and fixed hours for *pleadings* and *hearings*, every morning and evening, all the year round; and once a day even on Sundays; besides Courts of less extensive jurisdiction, held weekly, at least, in every county of the empire;—when you consider that before this *Tribunal* every individual, from the highest to the lowest rank is liable to be cited, and is privileged to appeal;— when you find that not only matters of public welfare, and of general concern, but affairs of local interest, of private life, and individual character, are made the subjects of discussion at this bar, you will not deem it a question of indifference whether you have an able Advocate, or none at all, in the Court of Public opinion. On the contrary, Sir, the fact is, that men of wealth, like Flimflam, are constantly hunting for geniuses in the line of Mason's profession, offering such splendid retaining fees, as will soon convert the old benches at Westminster

into dullard's dormitory;—for, since the magic of wealth has opened such a new and strange ascent to power and greatness, through this Court of Public Opinion, popularity necessarily supersedes justice; and the efforts of eloquence, and the dexterity of special pleading, find far more lucrative employment in the columns of a newspaper, than in the courts of law!

Lyttleton. I was not altogether ignorant of the increased and increasing powers of this Court which you have so well described; but, until this introduction, I never had an opportunity of conversing with any of its practitioners. To Mr. Mason I repeat my thanks, for the overtures he has made of his services. At present, it is very far from my intention to make any appeal to the Court in which he practices; and if ever it should be my misfortune to be cited there myself,

it will then be time enough to consider, whether I shall be more likely to obtain justice by defending my own cause, or by resorting to the hired eloquence of a professional pleader. In this latter case, might not I employ our friend Lancaster? (*smiling.*) He has talents,—don't you think, Mr. Mason, he would excel in the profession?

Mason. Never.—He can only write on *one* side of a question, and that, he must be convinced, is the just one. I appeal to himself, if, upon an occasion when I was retained to answer some pleadings of long-winded Vetus, and only wanted a few Greek and Latin quotations to set off against those, which give such a college air to my antagonist, (who, by the bye, is really *much too learned a brother* for most of us,) I ask him, whether he did not refuse to give me a single scrap of Greek or Latin, though he has all these matters at his fingers' ends, for no other reason,

than that he had not studied the subject in controversy; and, therefore, he would not abet the publication of an article, that possibly might be prejudicial to the cause of truth.

Lyttleton. (with emphasis.) Did he—did he act thus?

Mason. Oh, worse than that—sillier things by far! I may say it now, I hope, without offending him, that when I perceived the *ready* begin to slacken with him—and had reason to be convinced that a few guineas would be welcome strangers—I offered him, by authority of *a certain editor and proprietor,* at the tip-top of *a certain* interest, a *carte blanche* for his literary services, by which he might have made a fortune, and gained a post at court. For, Sir,—besides being a match for the best prose writers of the day,—Lancaster has a latent fire of poetry, that, once lighted up, would have totally eclipsed the *meagrim* monodies of Fashionable Methodism, as

well as the *demi-pagan*, *demi-christian*, rhapsodies of *sack-inspired* poets by profession. But,—(*risum teneatis*) my proud friend—with *pericranium* full, and pockets empty, spurned all the offered opportunities of replenishing the latter from the produce of the former; consoling himself with the meagre satisfaction, that it never should be said of him, "he hired out his "mind to the best bidder, or prostituted "the few talents he possessed for sordid "gain."

Lyttleton. And breathes there one such spirit still among thy sons, oh England!

Mason. Oh, yes, one certainly—*Ecce homo.*—Such a spirit is absolutely the occupant of that cage of skin and bones—(*Pointing to Lancaster*). Now it has always appeared to me, that flesh and blood are indispensable appendages to skin, bone, and spirit; that these are not to be sustained without good cheer—and that good cheer is not to be had without the *mopusses*?

Whatever miracles Mr. Lancaster may achieve in this respect, I must own I have never been able to discover any magic, but money, that could conjure a beef steak on my table. And yet I must suppose that he has found, or still expects to find, some substitute for money, or for beef; else he would never have refused the offers I have alluded to; nor have spurned the Liverpool purse of five hundred guineas.

Lyttleton. Liverpool purse!—Explain, Sir.—

Mason. Once, Sir, at a celebrated club of Wits, called the "*Eccentrics*," it fell to the lot of Lancaster, as a test of his qualification to make an *extempore* oration in *Defence* of the Slave Trade.—The manner in which he acquitted himself absolutely electrified the audience.—The perfect originality of his arguments—the subtilty of his conclusions—the brilliancy of his fancy, and the correctness of his language — altogether displayed him as

by far the most able sophist of the club; and such was the impression produced on the mind of a Liverpool merchant, who happened to be present, that he seriously offered the orator, on behalf of a Committee, of which he was the organ, five hundred guineas, if he would write a small tract in the same spirit, or throw the substance of his speech into a pamphlet.—At that very time, Lancaster was in debt, and in want;—but, would you believe it, Lancaster spurned the overture with disdain!

Lyttleton. Is this a truth?—Speak to me, Lancaster;—convince me that I do not dream.

Lancaster. It is true, Sir, that such an offer actually followed the wild rhapsody of the moment on that boyish occasion, to which Mason has alluded.—But, however marvellous it be that such a proposition should have been seriously offered, surely it is not matter of surprize, that the insult

was repelled with the indignation that it merited. I trust there is not to be found (out of the pale of the infernal crew themselves) a tongue or pen that could be stimulated by wealth's most potent magic, to plead in favour, or defence, or palliation of that hell-deserving criminal, who buys or sells a BROTHER-MAN!

Mason. A very good speech, Lancaster, but what will you get by *it?*—

Lyttleton. (*with a look of animated joy towards Lancaster,*) EVERY THING!

Mason. That's better pay than he ever expected, I am sure. Why, Sir, you beat the *Liverpool* merchant hollow—Well, Lancaster, I wish you joy with all my heart. I must be off—for I must send to London, by to night's post, an account of the opening of the Flimflamton theatre, which takes place to-morrow. The little manager, Dashall, comes down handsomely, and I ought not to disappoint him.—

Lyttleton. Mr. Mason,—Mr. Mason,—

you are culpable—I am not blameless—Too much bare-faced venality has, with too much complaisance, been already listened to.—Sir, your most obedient.

Here Lyttleton bowed, with an air that repulsed the wish of the humbled Mason to reply:—he, therefore, with good policy, took the hint, and left Lancaster and his patron to conclude their walk alone.

SCENE II.

Silent, with folded arms, and meditative brow, Lyttleton walked slowly on. Several minutes passed away, during which the only sound that fell upon the listening ear of Lancaster, was the monotonous dashing of the waves upon the pebbly shore they trod. Hoping and fearing, he watched the visage of him, upon whose lips his destiny appeared to hover, anxiously endeavouring to explore the workings of his mind.

The playful air of relaxation, that sat upon his countenance for the few moments during which he had trifled with the venal Mason, was now gone; and his stern and knitted brow denoted more than mere thought—it indicated anger.

Suddenly he stood still, and gradually raising his fine expressive eyes from the base to the summit of the white and craggy cliffs, that towered before them, he exclaimed,—

"Land of my Fathers! — Country of my Heart!—Cradle of Liberty!—Ark of Truth!—Oh, England! forgive me, that even for an instant I have played the traitor!"

Then turning to Lancaster, he continued—

"I am angry with myself, perhaps beyond the measure of my fault; but when I reflect, how much of all the glory and the good, which she possesses, England owes to the incorruptible advocates and agents of

her FREE PRESS, I stand self-condemned for treason, in holding even playful parley with that literary pander to the Town's corrupted taste! Every friend of liberty and truth, every lover of his country, must, on reflection, feel, and ought to show, contempt and indignation towards the whole pernicious tribe of which he is a specimen; a race of shameless hirelings, who, profaning the office of British Journalists,

" With infamous venality grown bold,
" Write on their bosoms—*to be let or sold;*
" Stamp Truth's bright name upon a lie just made,
" To turn a penny in the way of trade!"*

" To this most execrable trade, England must quickly turn her jealous vigilance, or her sons will be involved insensibly in intellectual darkness, the sure precursor of the fall of Freedom.—No Minister, however desperate, would have dared to hurl the open

* Cowper.

blow of violence, against that key-stone of the glorious arch of Civil and Religious Freedom,—the *Just Liberty of the Press.* But the venal spirit of the times has bred and fostered a nest of traitors to truth, to reason, and their country, whose iniquitous occupation it is, to pervert that noble engine of the mind to purposes of corrupt folly, fraud, and malice—and who thus render nugatory, by corruption, that influence of duty, which force could not subdue. For so long as Wealth shelters from general execration, and universal scorn, the corrupt agents of the press, where can bigotry with more facility disseminate its delusions, or despotism more leisurely prepare its chains, than among a generous and confiding people, whose credulity actually supports in affluence the wretches who callously conspire to betray them?

"But enough of the dark side of our theme!—Let me refresh my spirits with recollections of that noble disdain of bri-

bery, which you, even when pinched by want, displayed — let me remember the scruples of a just mind in refusing your assistance to Mason's Anti-Vetus;—and above all, let me reflect with joy upon the virtuous indignation with which you spurned the overtures of the vile traffickers in human creatures.

"These thoughts recall my mind to the object which I had in view, when I requested your company in this morning's stroll—I see—I know your heart's whole character. — You would reject a gift, however splendid, which entailed your dependence on the donor; or your mind's slavery to any prescribed system.

"Yet, let me plainly ask you, how you mean to live? Blush not at the recollection of your poverty—Blush not at the conviction, that your poverty is proclaimed by your consignment to that abode of paupers, from which it is my glory, and my joy, that I

have redeemed you. I perceive your *feelings* are excited; rather let your *understanding* be aroused: you have been too long the creature of impulse; escape at once from the snares of a sensibility too morbid to be followed as a guide, and select for yourself some path of life in which you may henceforth walk erect, and, with a manly step, pursue some object worthy of your talents and your energies! There is one subject, which I will not affect to pass over without notice.—I am not blind to the attachment which White's grand-daughter cherishes for you;—but I am convinced that, even were you ten times more of a lover than you are, you would never suffer a selfish passion so far to degrade you as to forget how great a disparagement there *now is* between Miss Clarendon and you:—she the heiress to fifty thousand pounds, and you——"

Lancaster. (*interrupting him.*) Spare

me, Sir,—Spare me. You have touched a painful chord, indeed.

Lyttleton. The pain is over—but it was necessary to premise thus much. Now let me ask another question: could you *pleasantly* spend a year or two in the society, I will speak plain, the service of such a man as I am? If so, I will engage, that you shall acquire tenfold the pecuniary profits which you could reap from any other occupation of your time and talents.

Lancaster. Are you serious, Sir?

Lyttleton. Most serious.—I have urgent occasion for a confidential secretary—You are precisely suited to my wants—A year or two, perhaps, spent in habits of friendly intercourse with a man, whose life has been a series of romances, may not be unpleasantly passed; and I shall be both gratified and obliged, if, in return for your company and services, you will accept the independence of a gentleman for the remainder of your life.

Lyttleton then, in a manner peculiarly his own, continued the conversation on the affairs of Lancaster—and so dexterously did he exert his skill in mental anatomy, that, in the course of that morning's walk, the whole heart of the young visionary was laid bare to the view of the delighted Lyttleton. His philanthropic spirit rejoiced in the unexpected discovery of such a suitable object of his patronage; and he inwardly resolved, that all the aid which wealth could give to genius and integrity should, without limits, be afforded to this new idol of his hopes!

SCENE III.

As they were returning to Flimfl[illegible]ton, they were met by the Earl of St. Orville.—

At the sight of this young nobleman, Lancaster started, trembled, and turned pale. He attempted to avoid the Earl, but Lyttleton observed it, and said—

"I understand, my Lord, that there is

some misunderstanding—some mystery, between your Lordship and this young gentleman; whom I must introduce, in his new character of Secretary.

St. Orville. There was, Sir—but this letter, which I have just received, dissolves the mystery, much to the honour of Mr. Secretary Lancaster, whom I am proud to take by the hand.—I told you, if you remember, that Mr. Lancaster and I had met once at the house of a *common acquaintance.* That person was the titled and celebrated *chere amie*, of a no less celebrated money lender, whose mansion is notoriously open to gamesters of all ranks.—A plan had been digested to entrap your humble servant, then little more than nineteen years old, into a marriage with a demirep of fashion, for which the infamous contrivers were to receive four thousand pounds. I escaped the matrimonial snare; but was fleeced of my money at their card tables; and further robbed by means of

pretended bonds, and other securities, in which the master of this notorious rendezvous of sharpers was a general dealer. At this house I once saw this gentleman; and his name was implicated in a transaction by which I was defrauded of two thousand pounds. When called upon by me for explanation, he thought fit only to give evasive answers, and general pleas of innocence, though the circumstances were clearly capable of explanation. I considered him guilty, but having abandoned the set, to which I considered him to belong, I troubled myself no further—nor, in all probability, would the remembrance of his person ever have recurred to me, had I not encountered, to my astonishment, in your Lancaster, the Lancaster of those days of my dangerous indiscretions!

Lyttleton. He has related the whole affair to me, and I am convinced of his innocence: he was never but that once in

the house, to which he was decoyed by an artful tool of the proprictor.

St. Orville. Lancaster, you may now do more than assert your innocence—you may prove it. The wretch, Falconer, is no more. He died a miserable death, and, stung by remorse, made an ample confession of those forgeries which incurred my suspicion of your guilt. I am now aware of the motives which prevented your explanation: they are honourable to your feelings of humanity, which made you submit to the unmerited suspicion of being co-agent in a fraud, rather than exculpate yourself by those proofs, which must have surrendered Falconer to the executioner.

Lancaster. How can I sufficiently acknowledge my obligations to your lordship's present candour, and your former generosity. The sufferings I have endured, from your suspicions of my guilt, have been, indeed, severe—yet they are but mild punishments

for a career of giddy thoughtlessness and extravagance, which, first leading me to disregard all estimate of expense, made me inevitably an instrument of injury to my creditors; then hurried me from precipice to precipice of dangerous errors, until I was consigned, by self-inflicted poverty, to a workhouse pallet.

Lyttleton. Enough of self-condemnation. We must all reflect that, 'The web of our lives is of a mingled yarn: good and evil: our virtues would be proud, if they were not checked by our vices; and our vices would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues.'—Thus says Shakespear, who of all writers, next to the inspired authors of Holy Writ, speaks closest to the heart of man. It becomes you never to forget the errors of your youth; but I shall remember only your incorruptible integrity of principle, that has left bare those errors, rather than cover them with the mantle of wealth,

which preferred the exposure of those errors, which was offered to you by the hands of corruption!

They had now reached the gate of Lyttleton's cottage, and the termination of their walk concluded the conversation.

CHAPTER VI.

SCENE I.

It was the universal echo at Flimflamton, "that this was to be *a prodigious* grand night at the

"LIBRARY."

This structure was the *chef d'œuvre* of Mr. Adhère, and the sums which he had *planned* away upon it, amounted to a total that startled even Flimflam himself.

A celebrated Beauty of Fashion, whose influence among the *huut ton* was supreme, had so far honoured the ledger of Flimflam, as to cause her Most Noble name to be emblazoned on the debtor side ; but always kept the opposite *per contra* page, a pure unsullied blank.

Old-fashioned book-keepers would have been puzzled to balance such sort of accounts; but modern adepts in the science of book keeing, are aware, that on some occasions, the value received for monies paid or lent, is necessarily invisible; is not expressed, but understood.

Thus, in return for many pecuniary advances to the Marchioness of Minchinton, Flimflam had received as many important *hints*. These *hints* could not certainly be posted in his ledger, yet has he often declared, that they much more than balanced all the pounds, shillings, and pence, which stood beneath her name.

When one of Flimflam's friends suggested to him, with a sort of *eclectic spirit*, that Libraries were now become so common, it would be better to hit upon some novel substitute—he consulted his Oracle of High Fashion and Taste, who exclaimed:

"The fool, the fool, what is a Watering-place without a Library? it would be like a

church without a pulpit, or more *apropos*, —a bell without a clapper! Let me just hint to you my notion of the matter," continued the Marchioness, (whose altitude and circumference inspired all the awe which naturally arises from a contemplation of the *great*) "the evil of the existing *things* of this kind, lies in their *pettiness*—let me just *hint* to you, that our sole objection to the pigmy booths, called libraries, at other places, is, the *dwarfish area* of the *things*.—Only conceive the *horrifying* barbarism of the thing, to find ourselves pressed into a corner, by a wedge of summerising slopsellers from the Minories on one side; and a screw of quizzing puppies, from Puddle-dock, on the other. Not that the *canaille* should be shut out—Oh, no—no—no—quite *au contrarie*—let them in by all means; they are the spectators, without whose admiration, we show-folks should act a poor spiritless part. But let me repeat the *hint* to

you, that to make the Library at a watering-place, at all adapted to the purposes of a staring-room for fashionables, it must have CAPACIOUSNESS—take that *hint*—let there be ample stage-room, and you will have a succession of actors from the great world, who will feel as much gratification in *walking in*, *walking round*, and *walking out*, as the humble sons and daughters of John Bull themselves experience in gazing at us, and guessing at our titles!"

Flimilam *took the hint:* Adhere soon realized it; and thus a spacious and magnificent pavilion of pleasure, reared its proud cupola, like a second Ranelagh, on the spot where had formerly stood the thatched parsonage house of the village of Thistleton.

Such was the origin of the superb Library at Flimflamton;—but when it was finished—Where was the suitable Librarian?—

Numerous and daring as were the specu-

lators and adventurers of the day, not one, of all the sanguine race, appeared to have sufficient spirit to embark in such a *patagonian* undertaking.

Advertisement followed advertisement, with proposals of the most alluring kind; "all the purchase-money might remain in mortgage; and any further sum, to any amount, wanted to carry on the undertaking, would be lent by the Proprietor, at common interest, without further security."

In vain—the bait was unsuccessful; the season was fast advancing. The Pavilion Library, built on the plan of the Pantheon; decorated with the most tasteful ornaments; furnished magnificently; and stocked with every work of Literature, that could be bought, was still a mere dead picture—and Flimflam was in despair!

At length, resolved that, at all events, the Grand Pavilion Library should open with the commencement of the season, he determined to take the risk of

the concern upon himself; and his anxiety was now turned to the discovery of a suitable conductor or conductors. In this task he had solicited the assistance of such of his fashionable acquaintances, as were most likely to give him proper *hints*.— At the head of these was Charles Meredith a good-natured fellow, who was upon familiar terms with all the fashionable world; and who contrived to support the character of a man of fashion without any fortune, and to obtain the reputation of a man of taste, with no better pretensions than a bold assurance, and pert flippancy of opinion.— This gentleman had, like the Marchioness, been introduced to Flimflam; and, like the Marchioness, had got into his books; to him, therefore, Flimflam mentioned his dilemma concerning a Librarian.

"My dear boy," said Meredith, slapping his friend the Banker heartily on the shoulder, "you must have *two* Librarians, and I have, at this moment, got the very

two in my eye, who, of all men in the world, are the best adapted to the situation :—Harry Puff and Bob Raffle, were certainly designed by nature, and have been admirably qualified by education and experience, ' to conduct such an establishment as the Flimflampton Library.

Flimflam. Indeed! Explain, Sir.

Meredith. In the first place, I defy you to find a cleverer *inventor* then Puff.

Flimflam. What do you mean by inventor ?

Meredith. Oh, a sort of Romancer ; or, if you must have it —a—a—did you ever hear of a *white lie ?*

Flimflam. Is that ingenious talent any recommendation ?

Meredith. Certainly — Why, Sir, if a man, in the situation of a Librarian, were to tell truth only once in the course of a day, it is ten thousand to one, but he would give unpardonable offence. — For instance, suppose Lady Mary Hazlewood

at his elbow, whose tongue being perpetually employed in scandalizing other people, she always has her ears ready to catch the whispers which she suspects are leveled at herself.—'Pray, Mr. Thingumme,' says her Ladyship, 'be so good as to tell me, what that person was muttering about? What did he say?'—

If the answer were to be given truly, it would be, 'He said that your Ladyship looked all the worse this morning, for the money and rest you had lost last night.'—Now Puff would say, 'He remarked, my Lady, what a loss Flimflamton would have to deplore, when we have the misfortune to be deprived of your Ladyship.'—

Then again — A young blood, from Throgmorton Street, who has got leave of old Daddy to spend a month and a few Bank notes where he pleases, puts up his horses, and with his head full of *high life*, trundles himself into the Library—and smacking his whip on his *bran* new

Wellington overalls, turns over the "*Subscription Book*," with the air of an accomplished lounger, and enquires; 'Well, Mister, who has the Devil sent among you? Any body here? Any Fashion? Any High-flyers? Let's look at your book —No, all cits—all cockneys—your place will never do at this rate.—The Newspapers announced, that there was not a hole to poke one's nose in; and moreover, that the Duchess of—of—what's her name, was here.'

Truth would say, "that the season was very indifferent, and that no Duchess was thought of;" but Puff would exclaim, 'We are very full, very full, indeed—quite crowded, Sir, — and we have shoals of fashionables fresh every day. The Duchess comes to-day or to-morrow, *certain*, and then we SHALL be gay.'

An Author, humble, and of course poor, creeps in on tiptoe, looks cautiously round, bites his finger nails, and then

whispers, 'How do you do, Sir?' 'Well—eh,—pray may I venture to ask you, Sir, are there many orders for that little work of mine? — Does it move? — Do you hear it spoken of? — What do folks say?'—What truth would say in this case, would drive the poor nervous scribbler away from Flimflamton for ever.—Not a copy sold, nor a single enquiry made—Puff says, 'Oh, I am absolutely torn to pieces for your work, Sir. You are really cruel to the world, and unjust to your own fame. Why don't you favour us more frequently, Sir, with your charming productions?—I wish, Sir, you would turn your talents to poetry—the picturesque beauties of Flimflamton, under your pen—oh, what a thing you would make of it!'—

Thus, you perceive, my dear boy, *(with another slap on the shoulder)* I have made it appear, that a Librarian, whose difficult business it is to make every conceited, idle, dissipated, nervous, and whimsical

visitor satisfied with themselves, must necessarily be *inventing or evading* from morning to night; and that I know to be Puff's grand *forte.*

Flimflam. So much for one qualification—What next?

Meredith. Secondly, my dear boy, Puff has very good teeth.

Flimflam. For biting?

Meredith. No, for tittering.—A genteel Librarian never fails to titter whenever the ladies speak to him, or he to the ladies.

Flimflam. Proceed, Sir.

Meredith. In the third place, Puff is thoroughly lazy.

Flimflam. What's the merit of laziness?

Meredith. It enables him to endure the languor of doing nothing—If a Librarian were of an industrious turn, he would be perpetually charged with rudeness, as every body expects him *to do nothing*, but listlessly to listen to their nonsense, and appear delighted.—Seriously, my

dear boy, Harry Puff was made for your Grand Library.

Flimflam. You mean my Grand Library was made for Harry Puff; who is he?

Meredith. Harry Puff is a smart young fellow, of genteel connections, whose head is an excellent catalogue of books for light reading, having been apprentice to a *nick-nack* bookseller in Bond Street; but

> " ———— Whose stage-struck mind,
> " Nor fate could rule, nor his indentures bind."

He has since tried the life of a strolling player, and, having at length discovered that his talents in that line are not quite so popular as Kean's, he is now convinced of his folly, and would, I am persuaded make an excellent Librarian.

Flimflam. So much for Puff—now, then, as to Raffle.

Meredith. Raffle's education began at seven years of age in a Billiard-room; and has been regularly followed up through all

the courses of the Gamester's School and Colleges. Raffle has, by his *prudence*, realized a few hundreds, and has absolutely foresworn all further practice. — The Honourable Mr. Light, Frank Lowe, Herefordshire Rashton, Lord Tomlins, the Admiral, and half-a-dozen others of that set, with *you know who* at their head, would, I have no doubt, patronise Bob; and they would bring over the two Duchesses the Marchioness of Minchinton, Lady Fanny, Mrs. Lowe, and all their followers, whose spirit and gaiety would give soul and zest to any undertaking. Bob's experience and talents point him out as the *man of all men* for the *dashing belles*, and the superintendance of the loo-tables, bagatelles, raffles, lotteries, and a snug Subscription Faro — while Puff ogles, titters, and talks nonsense to the sentimental heroines of the hour.

The eloquence of Meredith prevailed.

SCENE II.

Last season Puff and Raffle were the agents of Flimflam; *this* season the undertaking was at their own responsibility, and every attraction that imagination could devise, was now held forth at the Grand Pavilion Library.—As all the world were undoubtedly at Flimflamton, so all Flimflamton were at this instant in the Pavilion Library, or were going to, or returning, from that scene of gaiety and splendour.

The principal Saloon was crowded *most delightfully*, as one of the first ornaments of the musical world was expected to display her talents; and it was generally understood, that the train of the Marchioness of Minchinton, and Mrs. Flimflam, who patronised the night, would include a royal Duke.

Impressions as various as the number of beholders were created by the brilliant scene; and dialogues of every descrip-

tion, from motley groups of every rank and quality, were, at the same time, rehearsing on this splendid stage. The pen, whose office it is to fill these light pages, can only imperfectly register short samples of the conversation of two or three groups, selected indiscriminately from the whole.

SCENE III.

The Crisp family and Mr. Mason.

Crisp. (pulling Mason by the skirt of his coat.) Lord, Mr. Mason, how monstrous lucky that I have got hold of you at last—if we have not been squeezing and pushing to get at you so, you can't think,—Polly, my dear, don't lose your brother.

Mason. (elbowing away.) How d'ye do? How d'ye do? You must excuse me; but I am known to so many people here, that really my attentions are not at my own disposal.

Crisp. O, Sir, your most obedient—

pray don't make any apologies—I thought you might like to know what I have just overheard that old gentleman in black, with the flapped hat, and a bit of silk tied round his waist, like an apron, tell that little gentleman with the pig-tail.

Mason. (seizing Crisp's hand.) What was it? What did he say? My *dear* Crisp, you must not *mistake* me—I am always proud of every opportunity of taking you by the hand. Mrs. Crisp, my dear lady, I hope I have the pleasure to see you well, and Master, and Miss Crisp? —A'nt you delighted with the brilliancy, elegance, and accommodation, of this superb Library? You never saw such an assembly at *Margate*—no such room as this, there or any where else—the chandeliers alone cost a thousand pounds.—Well, Crisp,—and so—and so—the Bishop said.

Mrs. Crisp. (standing tiptoe.) La!—is that a Bishop? I thought Bishops had big wigs and lawn sleeves.

Mason. Yes, my dear madam, it is the Bishop of ——.

Master Crisp. Papa, lift me up—I want to look at it—shew it me.

Miss Crisp. I will see it—let me see a Bishop.

Crisp. Hold your tongues—you little torments. Its always the way with Mrs. Crisp—one can never go any where without these little plagues at our heels.

Mason. Well—but as you were saying, Crisp, or *going to* say—the Bishop said—What did he say, my dear fellow?

Crisp. Faith now, Mason, I've a good mind not to tell you, (and its a famous bit of news) for I think you meant to *cut* ;—and though you are a peg higher in the world now, than you were when we were both 'prentices, and used to spout speeches out of plays, at the *Robin Hood Club*; yet after all, an Apothecary and a house-keeper, let me tell you, is not to be *blown upon* by *a picker up of paragraphs*.

Mason. You will have your joke;—but now, my good fellow, what was it you overheard the Bishop say? Come now, don't be caustic, and you shall see a neat little article in a day or two on the Rosa Tinctura, that shall surpass every thing in the shape of a puff, that I have ever done.

Crisp. You are a persuasive fellow—why, then, you must know, from what I heard drop between them, it seems, that there is going to be *one of the grandest Reviews*, that ever was known in this country. The whole *Court*, and all the *Ministry*, and the *Bench of Bishops*, and all the *Clergy*, and the *Pitt Club*, are pledged to be upon the ground, to countenance this Grand Review. There is to be a sham fight, no doubt, as some thousands of a certain Scotch corps, (I think it was the *Edinburgh Regiment* they mentioned,) are to be knocked down;—no expence is be to spared—and it is to be done on a much grander scale than ever

was tried before. They had some secret at the end of it, for they began to jabber some outlandish lingo.

Mason. (*laughing.*) Ha—Ha—Ha—Good bye, Crisp; and thank you for nothing.—The Review they spoke of, is a Literary Journal, that is preparing to come out in opposition to the Edinburgh Review. That little gentleman is to be the Editor, and the Bishop is one of its warmest patrons. As to the gibberish you speak of, I conceive that an *apothecary and a house-keeper* ought to have understood it, for I dare say it was Latin, as the Editor is constantly quoting *Juvenal*; but I forgot, Juvenal's is not *dog Latin*—good bye. (*Moving off.*)

Mrs. Crisp. I wonder you *demean* yourself so before Dukes and Lords, and Duchesses and Ladies, as to speak to such low fellows as writes in the papers!—See, yonder is Miss Perryman and her brother, and Deputy Moveall, that's a party that will do one credit to seem acquainted with.—

SCENE IV.

The Marchioness of Minchinton and Mr. Stanly, &c. &c.

Marchioness. There really are capabilities in these rooms for a masquerade.

Stanly. What but a masquerade is the present crowd? Was there ever a more motley crew assembled under one roof? Examine the visages of the whole congregation, and, though vizors are not worn, you shall discover scarce one face in ten, that is the same which the owner wears at home. Poor things—what pains they take to *seem* the characters they *are* not!

Marchioness. Apropos of characters.—Have you seen the St. Orville group? Pray point me out the magician, Lyttleton, if you see him, and the old merchant, and his grand-daughter.—O, my evil genius, here comes an epitome—no, an encyclopædia of all vulgarity.

An extraordinary bustle and pressure announced the arrival of the great patroness of Flimflamton. An equipage of prodigious splendour had conveyed her to the door—and the crowd on each side giving way, formed an alley, through which Mrs. Flimflam swam into the Library, in motion and appearance, like the fresh painted figure at the head of a ship, at a launch.—She was a woman past the middle age of life, corpulent in person, coarse in her manners, vulgar in her speech, proud, and hard-hearted, bold, but grossly ignorant. Her dress was a ludicrous specimen of extravagant profusion and bad taste, in form, fabric, and colours: and her head, neck, arms, and wrists, were loaded, but not ornamented, with diamonds.

Swimming on, she perceived the Marchioness at a distance; and when with a vigour of arms and elbows, that disconcerted the well-dressed, and terrified the delicate part of the assembly, she at length

arrived at her—she poured forth a speech, intended to be strikingly genteel, in words adapted to the *conversaziones* of the laundry, with a voice and gesture which *Moll Flaggon* would have envied.

Absolutely overpowered by shame, the Marchioness blushed through her rouge, and was compelled to lean for support on the arm of Stanly.

To increase her mortification, just at the same instant, Stanly pointed out the approach of Lyttleton, with Lancaster on one arm, and Emma Clarendon on the other.—The Countess St. Orville, a contrast in all respects to Mrs. Flimflam, richly but elegantly attired, gracefully, with a sweet enchanting smile, moved forward, her beautiful arm encircling that of the venerable White. The young Earl, her brother, followed, leading the interesting Miss Oldways, while Charles Oldways was directing his divided attention to the old Merchant, and the young Dowager.

The Marchioness solicited of her friend the Countess an introduction to Lyttleton, with whom she entered into conversation, as well as with White and Lancaster, to the great chagrin of Mrs. Flimflam, who had no other method at hand of venting her spleen, than by an indirect attack on the poverty of the Oldways. Addressing herself to Stanly, in a key of voice which the object of her attack could not avoid hearing, she said, " Poor Miss Oldways ! I suppose she's come to hear *Thingummeeani.* At the Opera she may be heard for five shillings in the gallery—though my Box costs me seven hundred pounds for the season; —but to people that are buried by circumstances in the country, such a treat as this must be delicious. She's most charming in a private room—I had her at our party last night—we had a select hundred exactly. I'm sorry Mr. Oldways is so odd—for I'm sure I should have no objection to the young people being invited to

our parties, without being asked again.—Indeed, we ask many respectable families to visit us, though we know it don't suit them to give entertainments on the scale that we do. In this world of *ups* and *downs*, as the saying is, some grow richer and some poorer; but for my part, I'm sure I shall never shut my doors against a genteel family, merely because their fortune is the worse for wear."

Miss Oldways was not insensible to this sneer; but consoled herself with the idea, that the quicker feelings of her loved parent were spared the mortification of hearing these and many other coarse remarks, the offspring of a bad and vulgar spirit; and she was more than compensated for the momentary chagrin she felt, by the tender assiduities and delicate attentions of St. Orville, which his indignation at such grossness impelled him to display more unremittingly and more conspicuously, than the respectful nature of his attachment to

Miss Oldways would otherwise have permitted.

SCENE V.

Another group consisted of Mr. Perryman, Deputy Moveall, and Mr. Raffle.

Perryman. I say, Mr. Raffle, don't you think it would answer to have a hoy to run to this place from Billingsgate, as it seems to take so?

Raffle. My dear Sir, you forget how long a voyage it would be.

Perryman. Well so it might—but its half the pleasure of going to these sort of places.—If one comes by the way of getting a change of scene like, and a little recreation from the shop, only think what a complete change a sea voyage is:—how vastly salubrious to the constitution—besides the fun of it, and all that.

Raffle. Every one in their humour, Sir. I think we have provided for almost all

tastes. Mr. Deputy Moveall, I'm glad to see you wear so well, Sir. Do you remember the Alderman's *odd trick* for fifty pounds, at the Nag's head Club? Its some years ago now. I suppose the corporation is as famous for good whist-men as formerly. If any of the gentlemen should visit Flimflamton, I can accommodate them with every thing requisite for a comfortable rubber, quite snug.

Moveall. Why, I'll tell you, my friend, I am not so much in that way as formerly— I've grown fond of the country, and I can live cheap at my sister's farm, and so have got off all committees but such as pay a man something for his time—*you understand me.* A Sheriff's dinner, or a Lord Mayor's day, or a particular debate in the Council, sometimes keeps me, or else I am principally at the farm. But pray, what is the opinion of folks about this rich stranger who has bought Moreton? I begin to

think we have come here on a fool's errand

Raffle. Its all a mystery; but yonder stands one, who is likely to know more about him than any one at Flimflamton.

Perryman. What, he? Oh! bless you, I know him very well—he is one of the most active Police officers we have—and a very gentlemanly well behaved man into the bargain. We meet occasionally at the Burton in my neighbourhood. He has an excellent nose for scenting a *hoax*. He is here till the Duke goes; I have asked him about Lyttleton, and what do you think now is his opinion? Why, that this Lyttleton is come upon some grand plan or other, about the restoration of the Bourbons, not from what he overhears, for he's no blab, but because some of the French Princes, and the Duke himself, have had private meetings with him at the Cottage, where he conducts himself as stately and as grand as an Ambassador;—

and what's a better joke than all, my late lodger, Lancaster, is transmogrified into a sort of Secretary, to this grand Bashaw—ain't that good?

Moveall. I am inclined to believe the matter is pretty much as you say; but, however, a jaunt here and back will do no harm, Perryman, to either of us.

Perryman. No fegs, won't it.—At all events, I have got paid Lancaster's debt, and a handsome compliment from our 'prentice that was, Miss Clarendon White, as it seems she is now to be called, for a sort of hush money to sink the milliner, I suppose. Well, after all, the girl is better suited for a carriage than a counter; and, since she has behaved so handsome to sister Arabella, and her former companions, Burrowes, especially, I shall interfere no more in the matter.

SCENE VI.

Lyttleton and Lancaster.

Lyttleton. (*taking Lancaster aside.*) A word with you. Do you observe at the other end of the room a tall figure in a foreign uniform?

Lancaster. Yes—He with the mustachios?

Lyttleton. The same. He is looking for me, but I have reasons for avoiding him at present. There are eyes upon me *here* which I must keep blind to my connection with that foreigner. Now mark my instructions: put this ring upon any finger of your left hand—walk near him, with that hand raised to your chin, so that the ring may catch his observation. When you are satisfied he notices you, signify your knowledge by a respectful bow, and pass on in silence—wherever you lead he will follow you—conduct him to some

place where, quite unobserved, you may converse with him. Address him in Latin; and say that you are commissioned to deliver to him a ring:—and to receive whatever communication he has to make to him, who wore that ring.

Lancaster. What if he do not recognise the sign?

Lyttleton. Have I not said he will.

Lancaster. Your pardon—I obey.

Lyttleton rejoined his party, and Lancaster sauntered towards the foreigner. The ring was displayed as directed, and recognised as Lyttleton had foretold.

After a short absence Lancaster re-appeared, and delivered to his patron a letter, which he retired to a recess to read. It was in cypher—but Lyttleton was so perfect in the key, that he quickly unravelled the intelligence it conveyed; and returning to Lancaster, with a countenance

full of animation, he said, "Lancaster *the time is come*. Now, then, is arrived the moment to cast off the veil of mystery, beneath which, hitherto, I have spoken and have acted. A TALE OF WONDER, yet a tale of truth, shall be dictated to your pen, which, to the worthy inmates of the Manor House, will unfold how closely the destiny of their ancient family has been interwoven with that of him who is now called Lyttleton. At present be circumspect. The eyes of Emma Clarendon follow you every where;—remember my injunction. I do not exact insensibility to such charms, such constancy!—I do not ask you not to love, or not to hope. I only ask the trial of delay!"

The Countess St. Orville and others now approached, and a general conversation ensued, until the Library began to be